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LET'S READ ABOUT MEXICO



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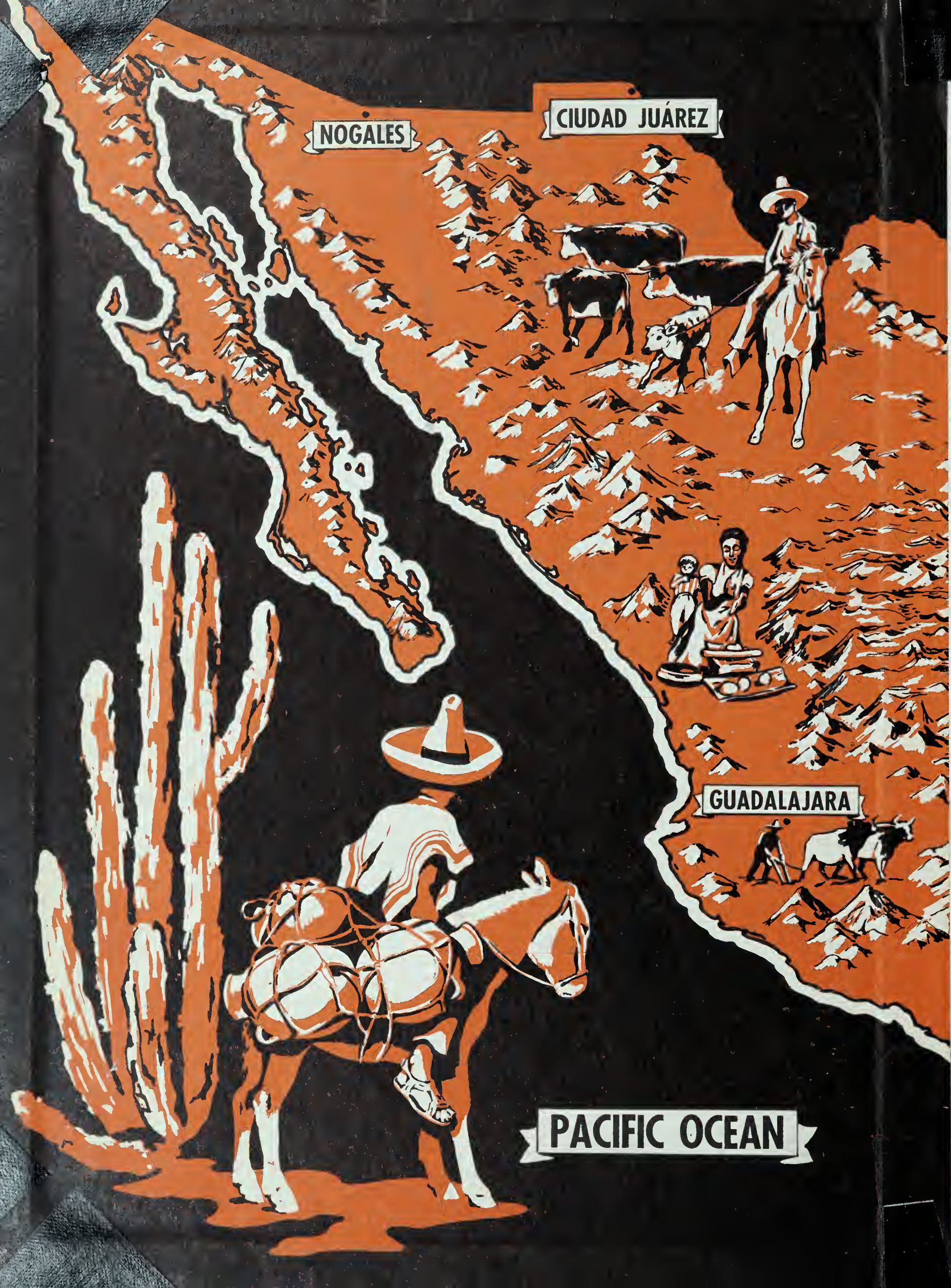
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LET'S READ ABOUT
MEXICO

by Patricia Fent Ross

Patricia Fent Ross is a teacher of ethnology at the National University in Mexico City. She is a recognized authority on Mexican culture and has written many books and articles about Mexico. Mrs. Ross was born in the United States but has lived in Mexico for more than twenty years. She writes vividly and authentically about this country from a background of years of study and association with the Mexican people.

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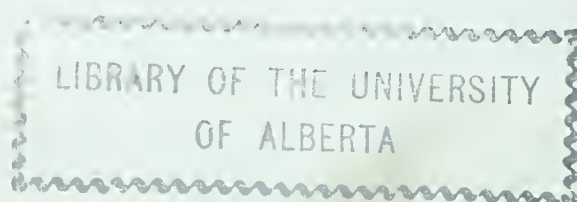


By Patricia Fent Ross

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TO THE TEACHER

The editors of this book believe that the secret of successful learning lies in motivating the student to *think*. This fundamental principle has been effectively stated by John Dewey in his book *Democracy and Education*: "The sole path to enduring improvement in the methods of instruction and learning consists in centering upon the conditions which exact, promote, and test thinking. Thinking is the method of intelligent learning; of learning that employs and rewards mind." Our great need is to lead students to think purposefully.

Purpose and Interest

Purpose and interest are the most important elements of thinking. To expect students to read and think about geography without first helping them find a purpose, or an interest, is to invite their failure. The first step in teaching geography must be exposing the student to a highly challenging environment that will arouse his natural curiosity. The teacher may create this environment with the help of the proper learning aids. A good filmstrip or large pin-up-board pictures will let all the students of the class see vivid views of life in Mexico. Good geography pictures are a powerful aid for creating interest and developing purpose on the part of the student. The clear, lighted pictures in a good filmstrip that shows vivid, fascinating views of Mexico and its people appeal to every student's natural curiosity. If a Mexico filmstrip or a collection of good geography pictures about Mexico is not available, the teacher may group the students so that the entire class can share most effectively all of the copies of this textbook that are in the classroom. If the attention of each member of the class is centered on the same picture at the same time, the students may enjoy as a group visual experiences that are almost as satisfactory as those made possible by a filmstrip.

The teacher may judge the quality of the interest created with the aid of these pictures by the number of questions that flow naturally from normal students whose curiosity has been aroused. These

questions should be recorded, discussed, and revised by the group. Those that offer a true challenge to the student's efforts open the way for profitable study about Mexico.

(A Mexico filmstrip designed for use with this book may be secured from Informative Classroom Picture Publishers, Grand Rapids 2, Michigan, for \$3.95.)

When a sufficient degree of interest has been aroused, the filmstrip projector is turned off. Successful motivation has brought forth a group of questions for which the class is seeking answers. During this period of study, large thought-provoking pictures displayed on the pin-up board and used by individual students will serve as effective learning aids and source material.

[A portfolio of Mexico geography pictures size $9\frac{1}{4}'' \times 12\frac{3}{16}''$ has been published for use with this book and other geography textbooks. It may be secured from Informative Classroom Picture Publishers, Grand Rapids 2, Michigan. (The Mexico portfolio — 48 plates — \$3.95.) Twenty chapters of loose-leaf text are included for reference use by the students.]

Help the Student Understand

In this book pictures, captions, and text are scientifically planned to help the student create in his mind many crystal-clear mental images that are necessary for understanding Mexico. The book is complete in itself and easy to comprehend. The average student can use it successfully on his own level with a minimum amount of assistance from the teacher if his interest has been aroused. To help the student build vivid mental images, the editors have included over a hundred photographs that were carefully selected for their value in showing the reader what he might see on a well-planned "geography" trip to Mexico. Each picture is accompanied by an informative caption that encourages the student to think and to form meaningful associations.

The pictures and their captions are a great aid for comprehension and for vocabulary building.

Three Levels of Reading Ability

To help the teacher provide for the great differences in the reading ability found in the average class, this book is designed for use on three ability levels. It makes possible purposeful investigation and purposeful reading by students on each of these levels:

- 1 — A few of the students will read purposefully only the geography pictures, some of the maps, and many of the captions.
- 2 — Most of the students will read the pictures and the captions, the maps, and much of the text.
- 3 — Some will read with good comprehension all of the text, the pictures and their captions, and the maps.

In each class there will be a few students who will read the book most effectively on the first level only. Each of these students urgently needs a copy of the book for his individual use. The challenging pictures and captions in each chapter make it possible for these students to share many important learning experiences. The teacher will be pleased to observe the amount of essential information that is gained and the thought-provoking experiences that are shared by these students, even though they are reading at the first level.

In the average geography class in which Mexico is studied, nearly every student will be able to use this book successfully. Each will read at one or more of these three levels at various times as the study progresses. But all will make the same trip through Mexico, and all students will gain valuable experiences in geography. As a result, all will be able to participate more effectively in group discussion and in group activity, based on an understanding of the important features of the geography of Mexico.

Attitudes

Our goal should be one of helping the student acquire an interest in geography that will insure his being alert throughout his life to geographic changes. We should help him acquire a knowledge of how these changes affect him, his country, and the world. If the teacher does not guide, direct, and stimulate the student in such a manner that he acquires this abiding geographic interest, he has failed to reach the desired objective. To develop this attitude requires that the geography class be one in which vivid, challenging learning aids are used in a concrete and interesting manner with the help of a teacher who is vitally interested in the subject.

How Many Copies Are Needed?

Each teacher must answer the question: "How many copies of this textbook are needed for my class?" Each teacher must personally assume responsibility for securing the learning aids that will enable his students to learn successfully. If the teacher believes it is desirable to study Mexico carefully so that each member of the class may see the land and understand the people, it is most desirable to have enough copies of the book so that one will be available for each student. However, this book can be used successfully in considerably smaller quantities. If ten copies of this textbook are used in the manner described above and are supplemented by other books, a good Mexico filmstrip, and Mexico teaching pictures, they can effectively serve a class of thirty students. All of the students in the class will share the deeply rewarding experience of seeing Mexico and meeting the people. They will form many of the true-to-life mental images that they would form if they were actually to visit Mexico.

The editors invite you to use this book in the manner explained here so that you may observe the quality of the results it is possible for you to achieve with this plan. The plan is based on the laws of learning and on generally accepted principles in the science of education.

The Editors

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CHAPTER ONE

THE LAND OF MEXICO

Mexico is a land of contrasts. Along its coasts are low plains and jungles. Rising from the coasts are great ranges of rugged mountains. Between the mountain ranges is a high, wide plateau.

Look at the map on pages 8 and 9. You will see two irregular columns of high, broken mountains marching down Mexico's east and west coasts. These are the Western and Eastern Sierra Madres.* They become higher and draw closer together in the southern part of the country.

Where the Western and Eastern Sierras meet, there is a wild tumble of towering mountains. Here we find the most magnificent snow-capped mountain peaks in Mexico. To the east, Orizaba* stretches 18,700 feet into the sky. It is Mexico's highest peak. Overlooking the Central Plateau* are Popocatepetl* (Smoking Mountain) and its companion, Ixtlaccihuatl* (White Woman). All three of these peaks are very old volcanoes.

After the mountains meet, they extend southeast as a single range. This is called the Southern Sierra Madre.* It falls away almost to sea level at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.* Then, where Mexico curves east, this mountain range rises again to form the highlands of Chiapas.* (See map on pages 8 and 9.)

Between the Eastern and Western Sierras is a great plateau. (See map, pages 8 and 9.) It is a continuation of the high plains of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. It occupies about one third of the total land area of Mexico.

Most of the northern two thirds of this plateau receives so little rain that it is almost a desert. It is too dry for growing good crops.

Popocatepetl* is the second highest peak in Mexico.
Great mountain ranges help make Mexico
a land of contrasts.



The **Central Plateau*** is cool and healthful. It rises to more than 8,000 feet near Mexico City.

However, grass does grow here, and there are many large cattle ranches in this region.

As the plateau continues south, it slopes upward. It is 3,000 to 4,000 feet at the border of the United States, but it rises to more than 8,000 feet near Mexico City.*

The southern one third of this huge plateau is known as the Central Plateau. More people live in this region than in any other

part of Mexico. Here are located two of the principal cities, Mexico City and Puebla.* The climate is cool and healthful. Many streams run down from the surrounding mountains, and there are shallow lakes in the valleys.

The lowlands lie between the mountain ranges and the coasts. Where the mountains crowd close to the sea, this low country may be only a few miles wide. Far to the northwest lies the Sonora

The Sonora Desert* lies in northwestern Mexico. It is a dry and desolate region.



Desert.* It is dry and desolate, much like the Mojave Desert* of our own West. In the northeast is a semiarid grassland. But farther south, heavy rainfall turns the lowlands into tropical jungles. These jungles are places of heat, mud, and insects. They are also places of many orchids and great trailing vines. In them we find forests of bamboo trees, some of them a hundred feet high. We also find chattering monkeys and great flocks of brilliant-colored parrots.

DO YOU KNOW

1. Locate on the map on pages 8 and 9 the three land divisions of Mexico.
2. Locate and name Mexico's mountain ranges. Name three high peaks.
3. With the help of the pictures, describe the tropical jungle.
4. In what region do most of Mexico's people live? Name two cities there.

Logging in Yucatán.* Dense jungles grow in areas that have a hot climate and heavy rainfall.





On the seacoast the climate is hot the year round.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CLIMATE OF MEXICO

In Mexico you can find almost any kind of climate that you like. You may choose a hot, steamy, tropical climate or a hot desert climate. You may choose a chilly plateau climate or the cool climate of the valleys. Mexico is really a land of many climates.

The most important reason for Mexico's many climates is the land surface. There are lowlands, plateaus, and mountains in Mexico. In the lowlands it is hot. It is colder on the higher plateaus and in the mountains.



Mountain climbing on Popocatepetl.* In Mexico, snow is found only on the high mountains.

In Mexico, any region from sea level up to 3,000 feet is called the hot land. If this land is in a rain belt, as the Gulf coast* is, (See map on page 20.) the climate is both hot and wet. Here there are dense jungles, and many tropical crops grow the year round. If there is very little rain, then the lowlands are hot, dry deserts. The lowlands along the northwest coast are like this.

The temperate land lies between the altitudes of 3,000 and 6,500 feet. Here the climate is warm but not really hot. It is warm enough for farming the year round. But there is not always enough rain to grow crops.

The cold land is made up of the mountains, valleys, and plateaus from 6,500 feet up to the snow line. Here the climate is always cool. For example, Mexico City* (7,500 feet high) has an average year-round temperature of sixty degrees. There is very little difference here between summer and winter. Except on the highest mountaintops, it is never cold enough to snow in Mexico. These high mountain peaks are always covered with snow. They are called the frozen land. Of course, nobody lives there.

Another reason for the variation in Mexico's climate is the influence of the trade winds. Southern and central Mexico lie in the path of these warm northeast winds. The winds blow over miles of ocean. By the time they reach the Gulf coast, they are heavy with moisture. As they rise to cross the mountains, they are cooled in the high air. The moisture in them falls as rain.

The northeast trade winds are cooled and drop their moisture as they rise above the mountains.





A banana plantation near the Gulf coast.* In the Gulf coast rain belt the climate is hot and wet.

These wet winds drench the Gulf coast with unbelievable amounts of water. The middle of this horseshoe-shaped coastal region often receives 120 inches of rainfall in a year.

By the time the winds reach the Central Plateau,* they have lost much of their moisture. However, they do bring enough rain from early June to the end of October to grow good crops. This is one of the reasons why more people live in this region than in



Clearing desert land in northern Mexico. Very little rain reaches the northern plateau.

any other part of Mexico. These winds bring very little rain to the northern plateau, so it is almost worthless as farmland. They do not reach the northwest coast. This region is a hot, dry desert, and few people live here.

The trade winds do carry some rain to the southwest coast. In the summer this coast also receives rains from winds blowing in from the Pacific, so there is enough rain for good farming here.

In Mexico one doesn't think of winter, spring, summer, and fall. There are only the rainy season (summer) and the dry season (winter). The rainy season begins about the first of June, and it lasts until late October. Then the dry season begins. It lasts until the following June. On the Gulf coast it is never dry. But the rains are much heavier in the regular rainy season. During the long dry season, trees and flowers continue to bloom, but the grass turns brown. Everyone looks forward to the rains, just as people in the cold northern countries look forward to spring.

DO YOU KNOW

1. With the help of the pictures and maps, describe the three climate belts found in Mexico.
2. Tell how the land surface causes these three climate belts.
3. Explain what the trade winds do.
4. What are the two seasons in Mexico? When do they occur?

A rainfall map of Mexico. Most rain falls in summer, which is called the rainy season.





Ruins at Mitla. This Indian temple was built over seven hundred years ago.

CHAPTER THREE

ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

The history of our country begins with the coming of the explorers. Mexico's history begins hundreds of years before ours. In Mexico, Indians were building a great civilization many centuries before Christ was born.

No one knows where the Indians came from. Many scientists believe that the Indians of both North and South America came from Asia thousands of years ago. Probably many unrelated tribes



Indian jewelry. The Indians of central and southern Mexico made beautiful jewelry.

came at different times, for there are great differences among them. The tribes speak different languages. There are many differences in their customs and even in their appearance, although all look Asian.

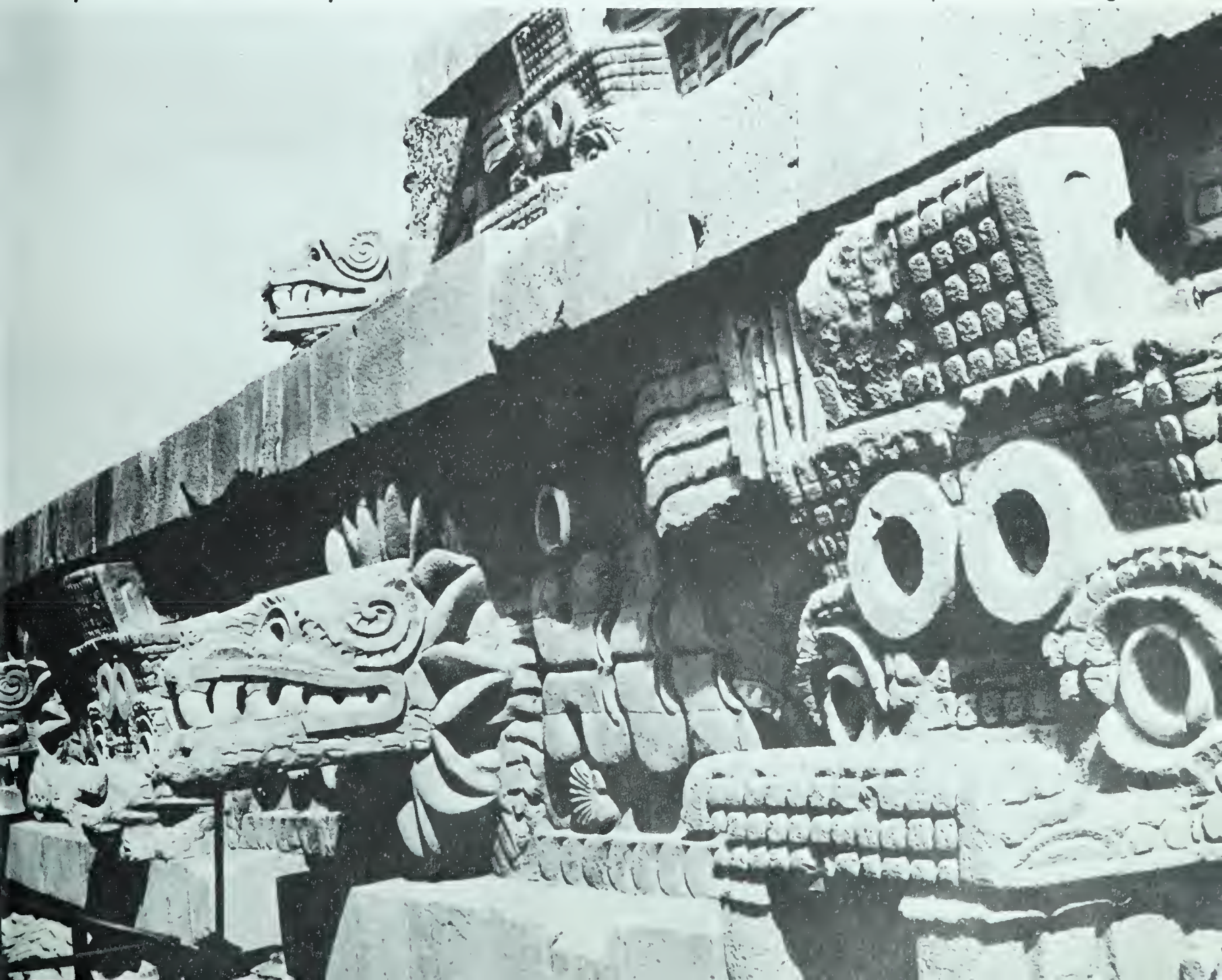
The early Indians of northern Mexico were primitive people who wandered from place to place as our own Plains Indians did. But in central and southern Mexico many tribes lived in real cities. Their cities were surrounded by large fields of corn and vegetables. These Indians built beautiful palaces, temples, and pyramids which sculptors decorated with skillfully carved designs. They made stone and clay figures of all sizes. They made beautiful ornaments of jade* and rock crystal.* They did all of this fine carving with crude chisels made of obsidian* because they had

no steel tools. Their wise men knew about astronomy,* and they had an accurate calendar.

These tribes were not united. Each city was a separate nation. They traded with each other, and sometimes friendly cities might band together for defense. Often a powerful city-nation would conquer weaker ones. Then the defeated cities would be forced to pay tribute, or taxes, in goods and crops.

One of the greatest of the Indian civilizations was the Mayan.* Mayan tribes were scattered over a large area, from central Guatemala* up into the Peninsula of Yucatán.* (See map on page 9.) Their descendants live there to this day. The Mayans were fine architects and artists. Their temples were among the most

Temple of the Plumed Serpent at Teotihuacán. * The Indians decorated their temples with carvings.



beautiful in the world. They wrote books and records in hieroglyphics.* Their skilled astronomers invented a calendar which was just as accurate as the one we use today.

The most desirable land was the high Valley of Anáhuac* (place of water), which we now call the Valley of Mexico. In the center of the valley was a large lake that has since been drained. The lake was surrounded by fertile fields and forests. The valley was encircled by high mountains. Through the centuries, this valley was ruled by one great civilization after another. There were the people of Teotihuacán.* They built the great pyramids that all visitors to Mexico should go to see. Then came the

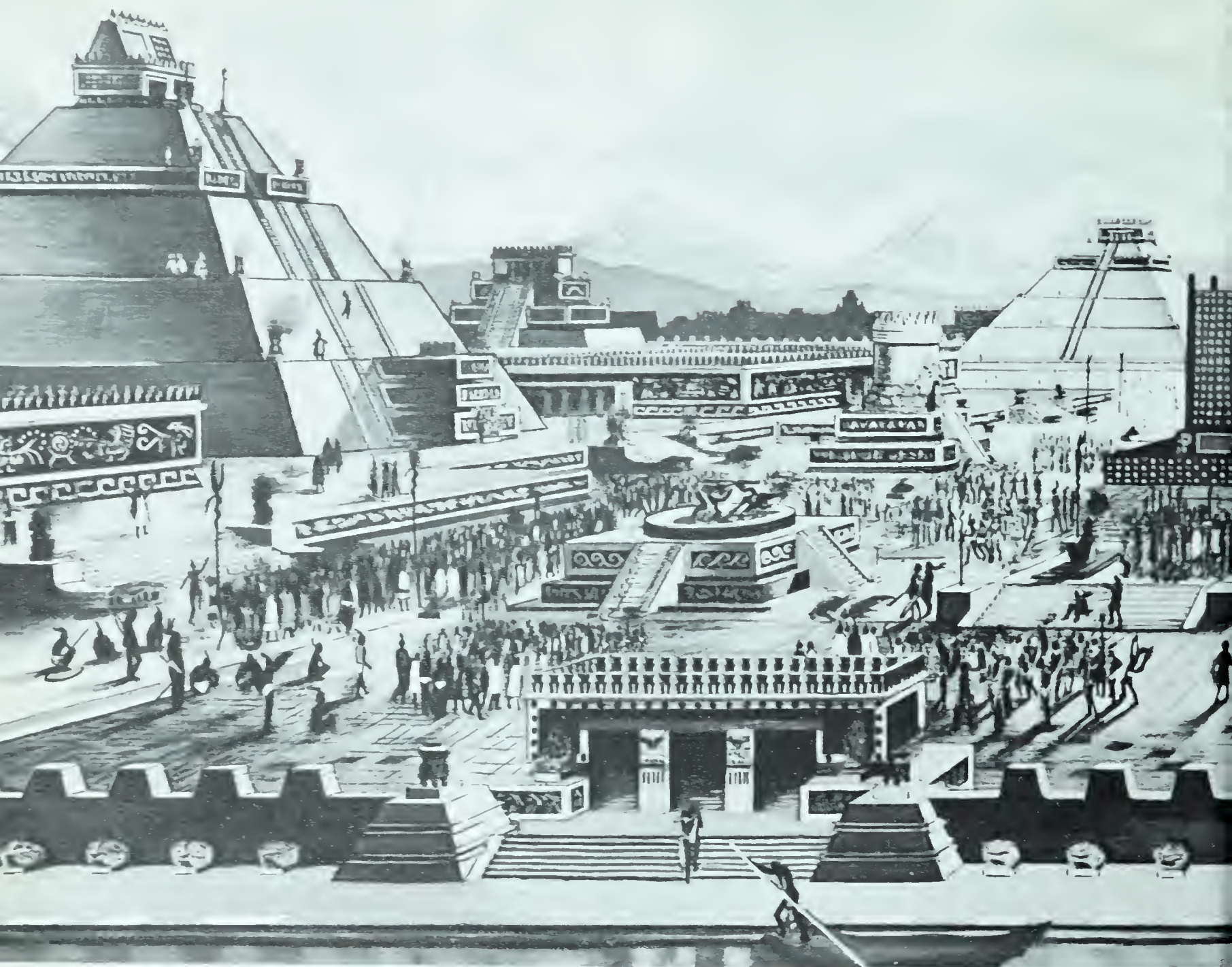
A Mayan* temple in Yucatán.* The Mayan was one of the greatest Indian civilizations of Mexico.





The Pyramid of the Sun was built by the Indians of Teotihuacán hundreds of years ago Toltecs,* who became even better artists and craftsmen. The Toltecs were followed by the Aztecs,* who in time became the most powerful nation in Mexico.

There were many Aztec tribes, but the most important was the one called the Mexica.* It was from this tribal name that the Spaniards later gave the name of Mexico to the whole country. The Aztec-Mexica* built a beautiful city on an island in the lake. They connected the city with the mainland by three wide bridges, or causeways.* They called their city Tenochtitlan,* but the Spaniards later changed the name to Mexico City.*



Tenochtitlan* was the beautiful island city of the Aztec-Mexica* tribe.

There is a legend about the naming of Tenochtitlan, which means “place where a cactus grows from a rock.” For centuries the Aztecs had wandered in search of an ideal home. Legend says their chief god had told them that they must go on until they found a cactus growing from a rock.

When the Aztec-Mexica reached the shore of the lake in this lovely valley, they saw an island. When they went to the island they saw a large rock, and a cactus was growing from the rock. On the cactus stood an eagle. The eagle held in its beak a large snake, which was the symbol of wisdom. The Aztec-Mexica were sure

that this was the sign for them to settle, for the eagle was the symbolic bird of the old god. So they built their city here and called it Tenochtitlan. Today Mexico's national flag has a picture of the eagle with a snake in its beak to show her pride in her Indian ancestry.

DO YOU KNOW

1. How did the early Indian tribes of northern Mexico differ from those in central and southern Mexico?
2. Where did Mexico get its name?
3. Describe the civilization of the Mayan tribes.
4. Why did the Aztec-Mexica call their city Tenochtitlan?

Aztec* carvings. Aztec sculptors carved these designs without the help of steel tools.





Hernando Cortes* sailed from Cuba,* and in 1519 he landed on the coast of Mexico.

CHAPTER FOUR

ARRIVAL OF THE SPANIARDS

It was Holy Week,* in the year 1519, when a small company of Spaniards landed on the hot coast of Mexico. The men put up a cross and some bamboo huts. They called their village Veracruz.* (See map above.) Thus began one of the greatest adventures in history.

The group of Spaniards was led by Hernando Cortes,* a brave young captain. He had sailed from Cuba* with eleven ships, six hundred men, ten cannons, and sixteen horses. With this small force, Cortes planned to conquer the Indians of Mexico and seize

their wealth for Spain. He also wanted to convert them to Christianity. From the Indians along the coast, he heard of the rich and powerful Aztecs* and their beautiful island city. Cortes decided to conquer that city.

In faraway Tenochtitlan* the Aztec emperor, Moctezuma,* heard about the coming of the white men. He thought of Quetzalcoatl,* the "White God." According to legend, Quetzalcoatl had once lived with the Toltecs.* When he left them, he had said that one day he and men like him would return to rule the land. Could it be that Quetzalcoatl had returned?

Cortes destroyed his ships so that his men could not return to Cuba.





Cortes and his men marched across rugged mountains to reach Tenochtitlan.*

Cortes made friends with one of the large tribes of coastal Indians. He learned that they hated the Aztecs because the Aztecs forced them to pay taxes. Many other tribes hated the Aztecs for the same reason. The Indians promised to give Cortes food and porters for the inland march. Then some of Cortes' own men mutinied. They wanted to return to Cuba. Cortes burned his ships to end all talk of returning.

In August he left some of his men to guard Veracruz and began the daring march to Tenochtitlan. The little army struggled through hot lowland forests and up the high, rugged mountains.

At the plateau town of Tlaxcala,* they fought and defeated the Tlaxcalan Indians. Then the Tlaxcalans and Spaniards became friends, and two thousand of their warriors joined the forces of Cortes. In November the army crossed the last mountain and looked down on Tenochtitlan. The city shone like a silver jewel on the lovely lake.

Moctezuma received them with great honor because he feared to displease the white gods of Quetzalcoatl. He gave them gold and jewels, and a great palace to live in. But he would not promise

The Spanish were received with great honor. Moctezuma* thought they were white gods.



to be loyal to Spain. Cortes waited, hoping that Moctezuma would give in.

Because the Spaniards were only guests in the city, Cortes knew that very soon the Indians would expect them to leave. So Cortes forced the great emperor to come to his palace. There he held Moctezuma a prisoner, but told him that he was an honored guest. The Spaniards were holding Moctezuma only to keep the Indians from attacking them. Moctezuma was still thinking of Quetzalcoatl. He did not attempt to escape. Instead he tried to make his people believe that he was staying in the palace as Cortes' friend.

In the spring a thousand more Spaniards came from Cuba and joined Cortes. One day in June, some of his men killed a number of

Cuauhtémoc* and Cortes. Cortes conquered the new Aztec leader and his island city.



Indians at a pagan ritual. Now the outraged Indians would not listen to Moctezuma. They attacked the Spaniards' palace. During the fierce battle, Moctezuma was killed. The fighting lasted two weeks.

At last the Spaniards had no more food and water in the palace. Cortes decided they must escape from the city. On the night of June 30, 1520, they left the palace and reached one of the causeways.* But the Indians were on guard. There was a terrible battle. By dawn, almost two thirds of the Spaniards and their Tlaxcalan allies were killed. The rest escaped and returned to Tlaxcala. That night is still known as "The Sad Night."

A year later, Cortes returned to Tenochtitlan. Thousands of Indian warriors had joined his army. They made boats to launch on the lake. The new Aztec emperor, Cuauhtémoc,* tried to defend the city. His warriors fought bravely, but their weapons were no match for the Spaniards' steel swords and guns. Cortes captured all three causeways. And worse, he cut the aqueduct* that carried water to the city from the mainland. With no drinking water and very little food, many Indians died of thirst and disease.

The battle lasted more than six weeks. At last, on August 13, 1521, the Aztecs surrendered. More than half of them had been killed or had died of disease. Their beautiful city was in ruins. The Spanish rebuilt the city and changed its name to Mexico City.* Then began three hundred years of Spanish rule.

DO YOU KNOW

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Why did Cortes want to conquer the Indians of Mexico? | 3. What happened on "The Sad Night?" |
| 2. What was the legend of Quetzalcoatl? How did it help Cortes? | 4. How were the Aztecs forced to surrender to the Spanish? What happened to the Aztec city? |





Most Mexican people of today are a blend of the Spanish and the Indian races.

CHAPTER FIVE THE MEXICAN PEOPLE

When the Spaniards arrived in Mexico, the land was already settled by highly civilized Indian nations. The Spanish conquered these Indians. Then they moved in to live with them. Many of the Indians and Spanish settlers married. You can see the blending of these two races in the people of Mexico today.

In Mexico there are very few people of pure Spanish blood. Probably they make up less than one percent of the population of



A Mexican gentleman. Few people of pure Spanish blood are found in Mexico today.

almost twenty-six million people. Nearly one fourth of the population is of pure Indian blood. All the rest of the Mexicans are *mestizos** (mess TEE sohs). *Mestizo* means “mixed”—that is, part Spanish and part Indian.

Mexicans with more Spanish blood than Indian are usually fair- or olive-skinned. They usually have dark hair and dark eyes. They look very much like the Spanish, and their language and customs are Spanish. A few still live on large country estates. But most of them live in the cities. Some live in beautiful old colonial homes that are built around a central court, called a *patio*.* Some live in modern houses or big apartment buildings. They work in office buildings and modern factories. In fact, they live and work just as city people do everywhere.

A mestizo* family. Mestizos with very little Indian blood look and live much as the Spanish do.



Mexican people with very little Spanish blood look more like the Indians. They live very much as the Indians do. Most of them live in villages. They usually cling to the old customs, beliefs, and festivals of their Indian ancestors. But all of them have some Spanish customs, just as the city people have a few Indian traditions.

There are still many pure-blooded Indians in Mexico. Many of the tribes living in remote parts of the country did not marry Spaniards. These Mexican Indians do not look like other North American Indians. They do not have copper-colored skin. Instead, their skin is brown, and the color varies from golden to dark brown. Their hair is straight, but usually fine and glossy. Mexican

Mestizos with little Spanish blood cling to Indian traditions but follow some Spanish customs.





Pure-blooded Indians still have their own villages and live much as their ancestors did.

Indians from different tribes do not all look alike. The people of some tribes are taller than those of other tribes. The size of the nose and the shape of the eyes differ. Some have lighter skin than the people of other tribes.

These pure-blooded Indians still live in their own villages. Most of their villages are in the jungles or mountain valleys, far away from the cities. In recent years the government has built roads into some of these regions. Most of the Indian villages, however, are still very difficult to reach. To visit such a village, you would have to go on foot or by horse or burro. You would travel through



In the hot country many Indian houses have roofs made of grass or palm leaves.

thick jungle or along narrow mountain trails. Such a journey might take a week or ten days.

Most Indian villages are very clean. The people live in houses made of sun-dried bricks. Usually the floors are made of hard-packed earth or cement. Roofs are made of tile*or *adobe** clay, like the walls, and are supported by strong rafters. In the hot country many people live in houses made of bamboo poles. These houses have roofs made of grass or palm leaves.

The Indian people still follow many of their old customs and live very much as their ancestors did. Most of them still speak their old Indian languages, but many of them now speak Spanish,

too. Each tribe has its own style of tribal dress, even to the type of sandals worn. The tribes never copy each other's style of clothing. You can easily tell what tribe an Indian belongs to by his tribal dress. But now in some villages, the Indians wear their tribal clothes only for festivals. For everyday use they wear ordinary peasant dress, like the *mestizo* villagers. (See chapter on dress, page 108.) It is cheaper to make such clothes than it is to make the lovely tribal costumes. So Mexico's customs and manners, like most of her people, are a mixture of Spanish and Indian.

DO YOU KNOW

1. With the help of the pictures, tell what the Indians of Mexico look like and describe how they live.
2. How would you have to travel to visit some of the Indian villages?
3. What does *mestizo* mean? Describe the two types of *mestizos* and tell how each type lives.

A Mayan* Indian boy with his burro and dog. Mayan children love animals.





An hacienda.* The Spanish conquerors set up great farm estates, called haciendas.

CHAPTER SIX

LAND AND REVOLUTION

For 300 years, from 1521 to 1821, the Spaniards ruled Mexico. They taught Christianity to the Indians. They built hundreds of beautiful churches. They brought to the New World the first wheeled carts and the first horses, cattle, sheep, wheat, and rice. They also brought the European arts. But their rule was selfish and often unwise.

The rulers thought only of making fortunes for themselves. The people were forbidden to develop big industries so they would have to buy goods from Spain. Indians, *mestizos*,* and *criollos** (Span-

iards born in Mexico) could not hold public office. The Spanish took the mines and made the Indians work in them. Many Indians and *mestizos* had to work for the Spaniards almost as though they were slaves. The common people had no schools and few luxuries. Worst of all, the Spanish conquerors took from the Indians almost all of their lands. They gave them to Spaniards, who set up great farm estates, called *haciendas*.^{*} The Spaniards then made the Indians work the land for them.

It is hard for city people to understand how Mexicans feel about their land. They love their villages and their land the way we love our country. The Indians of long ago were agricultural people. Even today, three fourths of Mexico's people are farmers. The

Plowing with oxen. Three fourths of the Mexican people are farmers.



land has always been their life. All their food comes from the land. Ours does too, but many of us buy it in stores and do not think about the land. But Mexican farmers work hard to raise their own food directly from the earth. They have always felt that their land and its crops are gifts from God, and that only people who love the land are worthy of these gifts. No matter how poor a Mexican farmer may be, he feels independent if he owns his field. So, when the Indians' land was taken from them, they felt like slaves.

After 300 years, the Mexicans were very tired of Spanish injustice. When the *criollos* and the educated *mestizos* decided to rebel, the poor *mestizos* and Indians were ready to join them. They fought for "land and liberty," and land came first, for with-

A Mexican farmer feels independent if he owns his own field, no matter how poor he may be.





Father Hidalgo* was a leader of the people in their struggle for "land and liberty."

out land they could not feel free. The revolution began on September 16, 1810. September 16 is now Mexico's Independence Day.

The revolution lasted ten years. In 1821 Spain finally gave up, and Mexico was free. But many of the people were no better off than before. A few rich families still owned the land, and the peasants had to work for them. When the leaders were forming a government, they forgot the poor peasants. Some of them wanted a republic like the United States. But under Spanish rule they had had no chance to learn how to govern themselves. Good



Benito Juárez* was a great Indian president of Mexico.

leaders were weak and were not able to carry out their programs. The strong ones became dictators* and tyrants.

Mexico had one great president. He was a wise and good Indian named Benito Juárez.* President Juárez tried to give the land back to the people. But the rich landowners got the French army to help them overthrow Juárez and the republic. Then they invited an Austrian named Maximilian* to become emperor. In 1867 Juárez's army drove out the last of the French and executed

Maximilian. When Juárez died, Porfirio Díaz* became dictator. He ruled Mexico for thirty-four years. He brought order to the country, but he was not interested in helping the peasants of Mexico.

In 1910 there was another revolution to drive Díaz out. It took a long time, but the people finally won. In 1917 the new government adopted a new constitution. By 1920 Mexico had a stable government, and the hard work of trying to make the country a real democracy had begun.

Since 1920 the government has built thousands of schools. Many hospitals and health clinics for the poor have been built. Most of the big *haciendas* have been divided, and little by little

Revolutionists of 1910 drove Díaz from office. He was a dictator* for thirty-four years.



the land is being returned to the peasants. The government has built large dams to provide water that is greatly needed for irrigating farmland. It is also teaching the peasants modern farming methods. Improvements such as these take a long time and require a large amount of money, so there is still much to be done. But now, at last, the proud Indian and *mestizo* peasants are getting the “land and liberty” that they lost over four hundred years ago.

DO YOU KNOW

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. When the Spanish came to Mexico what things did they bring with them? | 3. Tell how the Mexicans won their freedom from Spain. |
| 2. How did the Spanish rulers treat the Indians? | 4. What is the Mexican government doing to help its people today? |

Mexican villagers learn modern farming methods. The land is slowly being returned to them.





A large village. Mexican farmers live in villages, which are surrounded by their fields.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE VILLAGE FARMER

It is planting time. So every morning Papa Chavez gets up about three o'clock, long before daylight. He brings the oxen from the shed and goes through the dark streets and out to his cornfield. Mexican farmers don't live on their farmland. They live together in a village, surrounded by their fields. Papa Chavez's field is almost a mile from the village. It is light enough to see a little when he gets there.

Manuel is only ten, so he sleeps until six o'clock. Then he, too, goes to the field. Since he is ten, and is no longer in school, he works with his father in the cornfield, which is called a *milpa* (MEEL pah). He prods the oxen along while his father guides the plow. They work in the field until three o'clock in the afternoon. Then they go home to dinner. After dinner Manuel helps his mother or plays in the *plaza** with his friends. Papa Chavez takes care of his animals and works in the garden behind the house until dark.

Manuel's father owns only seven acres of land. Many Mexican farmers own much more land than the Chavezes do, but some own even less. This is a big problem in Mexico. If you have only

Winnowing wheat. As the grains of wheat fall the wind blows away the chaff.



seven acres and your whole family must live on what you can raise on it, there isn't much grain left over to sell. You cannot afford a tractor. Often there isn't enough money to buy better seeds or fertilizer* for the land. But like all village farmers, the Chavezes love their land. They cheerfully cultivate their small fields with the tools they have. They work in much the same way their people have worked for hundreds of years.

In the early spring, they break the ground with a wooden plow pulled by two oxen. They plant their seeds by hand. Papa Chavez walks ahead, and with his "planting stick" he makes a neat row of evenly spaced holes. Manuel follows him and drops a few grains of corn into each hole. Then he covers the hole and presses the

Plowing begins in early spring. The ground is broken with a wooden plow pulled by oxen.



ground flat with his foot. When the young plants appear, Manuel helps his father heap up the earth around each hill of corn. This keeps the ground around the roots from drying out so rapidly. While the plants are young and tender, Manuel and his father hoe the fields to keep them free of weeds.

During the summer the Chavezes often eat green corn. They boil it in the husks, in a kettle of salt water, and eat it with a sprinkle of powdered red chili.* In the fall, when the ears are ripe and hard, they gather the corn. Then they strip off the husks and store the precious ears of corn in the storeroom at the back of the house. Manuel's mother saves the husks for wrapping *tamales*.* Later they cut the cornstalks with long, sharp knives called

The corn is harvested in the fall when the ears are ripe and hard.





The main house of an hacienda.* There are only a few big haciendas left in Mexico.

machetes (mah CHAY tays). They feed these stalks to the oxen, burros, and pigs.

The Chavezes are lucky because they own their land. During the days when Spain ruled Mexico, the Spanish took most of the good farming and grazing land and gave it to favored settlers. These wealthy families established large farm estates called *haciendas*,* and the Indian and *mestizo** farmers had to work for them.

An *hacienda* always had a fine mansion for the owner and a collection of poor, small houses for the workers. A very big *hacienda* might have two or three villages of workers scattered over its miles



Children tend sheep and cattle on grazing land owned by a community farm.

of land. Each *hacienda* had its own workshops, store, and church. But it rarely had a school.

About 1920 the new government began taking land from the big *haciendas* and giving it to the landless farmers. Most of the old *haciendas* have been completely divided up. Only a very few big *haciendas* are left in Mexico. Most of this land has been given to villages or to groups of workers as a community. The government sets up a community farm, called an *ejido* (ay HEE doh). This

community farm then belongs to the group, not to the individual farmers. Grazing land is used by all the members of the *ejido*, but each man has the use of a special field for crops. A government bank lends money to the *ejidos* to buy seeds and farm implements. More than one fifth of Mexico's farmland is now owned by the *ejidos*.

Because of mountains, jungles, and deserts, less than half of the land in Mexico is suitable for farming. Yet two thirds of the people make their living from the land. Much of the soil is poor, and most farmers need fertilizers to enrich their soil. They also need irrigation systems to water their fields.

Little by little conditions are improving. New factories are now producing cheap fertilizers. In recent years the government has built irrigation systems that water thousands of acres of land. But

A modern diesel tractor owned by a large community farm.



many more are needed. The government is now working on a project to clear the jungle in one of the rich, hot regions of the Gulf coast.* When this work is finished, there will be better land for many farm families.

With its wide range of climate, Mexico has a great variety of crops. On the hot coastal plains and in warm mountain valleys, there are tropical crops such as coffee, cacao,* chicle,* and bananas. There are also pineapples, coconuts, figs, and many other tropical fruits. Wheat and barley, as well as many other crops that we grow in the United States, are raised on the high plateau. Corn, beans, and vegetables are grown everywhere.

Harvesting tomatoes grown on irrigated land in northern Mexico.





Drying henequen* fibers. Mexico produces more of this rope-making fiber than any other country.

In order to feed all her people, Mexico has to import from other countries some agricultural products, such as corn and wheat. But she sells to other countries more than twice as much agricultural produce as she buys. Quantities of coffee and henequen* are exported. Vegetables grown on the irrigated land in northern Mexico are sold in the United States. Rice, sugar, spices, oranges, bananas, and lemons are also exported.

DO YOU KNOW

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Tell how most Mexican farmers grow the corn that they need for food? | 3. What is an <i>ejido</i> ? How much of Mexico's farmland is now owned by <i>ejidos</i> ? |
| 2. What is an <i>hacienda</i> ? What has happened to most <i>haciendas</i> ? | 4. How do most of the people in Mexico earn their living? |



Mineral deposits are found in many parts of Mexico.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MINERALS AND FOREST PRODUCTS

Long before the Spaniards came to Mexico, the great Indian nations were mining and working gold, silver, and copper. The Spanish were anxious to conquer the country because they wanted to seize these treasures of gold and silver. For three hundred years the Spanish rulers sent shiploads of Mexico's riches to Spain. All over Mexico they built beautiful churches and palaces, which they decorated with gold and silver.

Today metals and oil are Mexico's most valuable resources. They make up over two thirds of the total value of her exports.

The map on page 58 shows that mineral deposits are located in many parts of Mexico. But the best mining districts are found in the central part of the country not far from Mexico City.* Experts think that not more than half of Mexico's minerals have been brought to the surface.

Some of the old mines are not worked now because the ore contains very little metal. Mining such ore is very expensive. Many mineral deposits are not mined because they are in very mountainous sections. It is difficult and costly to build railroads and highways through such mountainous country. But until these

A gold mine. Most of Mexico's gold is exported to the United States.



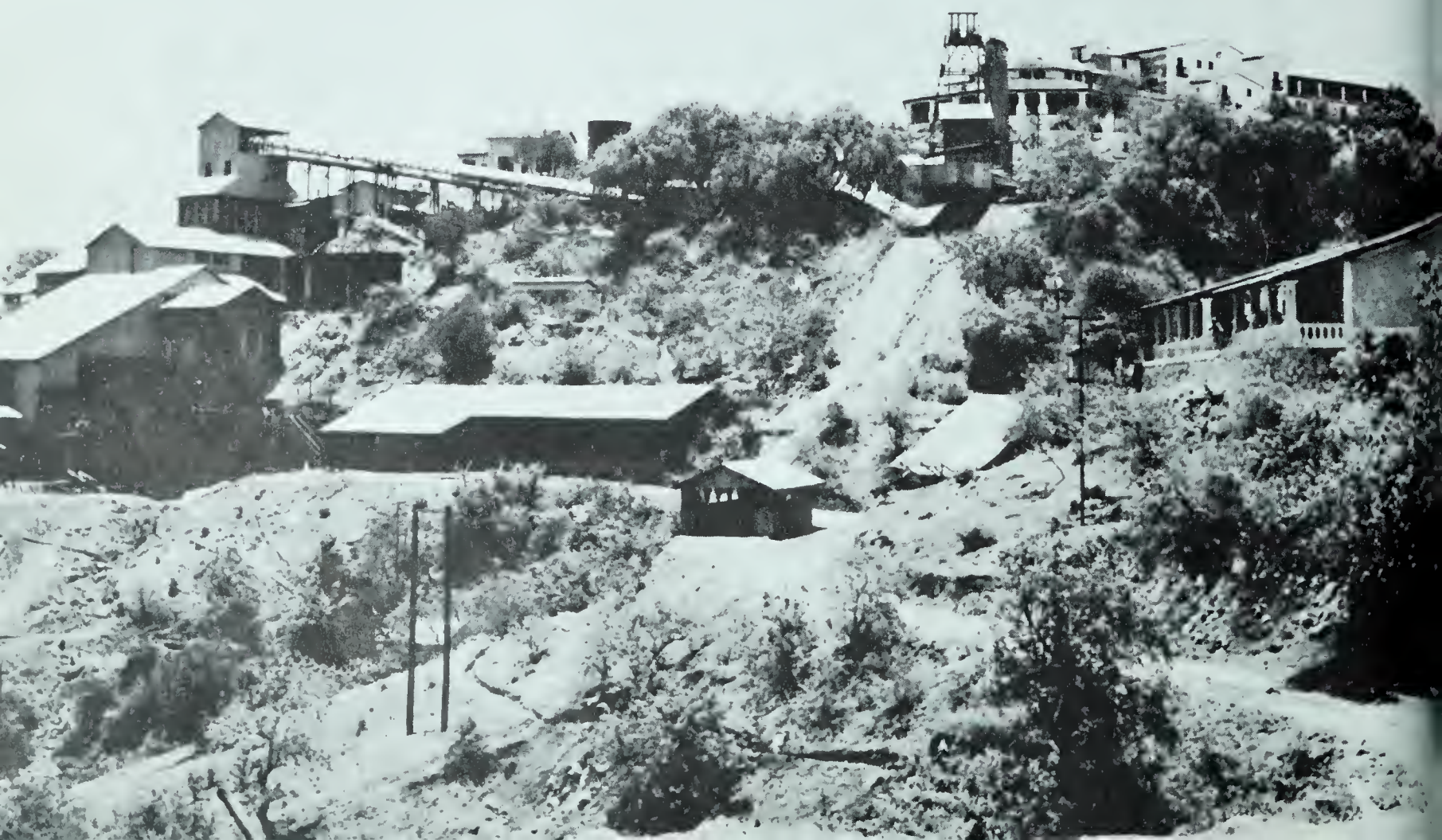
An oil refinery. Oil is one of Mexico's most valuable resources. Much of it is used by the country's growing industries.

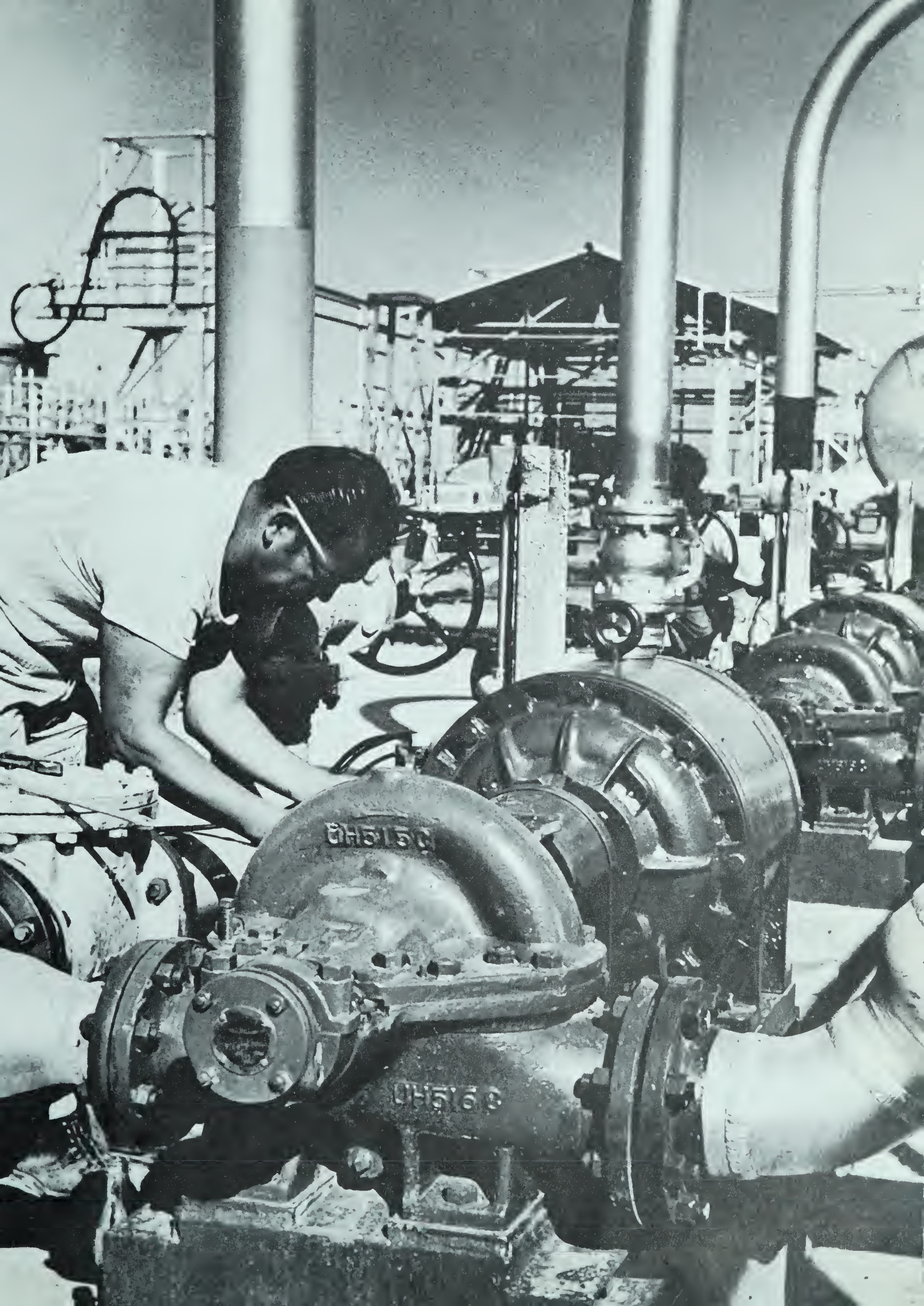
railroads and highways are built, much of Mexico's mineral wealth must remain hidden deep in the earth.

One of Mexico's most important mineral resources is silver. Mexico produces more silver than any other country in the world. Mexico also produces a great deal of gold. Most of the gold is exported to the United States. Lead, zinc, copper, iron, coal, and some very scarce minerals are found in Mexico. There are also many mines that yield precious and semiprecious stones.

Oil is another of Mexico's valuable natural resources. The map on page 58 shows that the important oil deposits are located along the Gulf coast.* Most of the oil fields once belonged to foreign companies. Today they belong to the Mexican government. Now more of the profits from the oil industry are kept in the country. Mexico used to sell much of her oil to other countries, especially when foreign companies owned the fields. Now less oil is exported

A Mexican silver mine. Mexico produces more silver than any other country in the world.







Hauling mahogany logs. Mahogany and other hardwoods are used for making furniture.

because the country's growing industries need more oil for their own use.

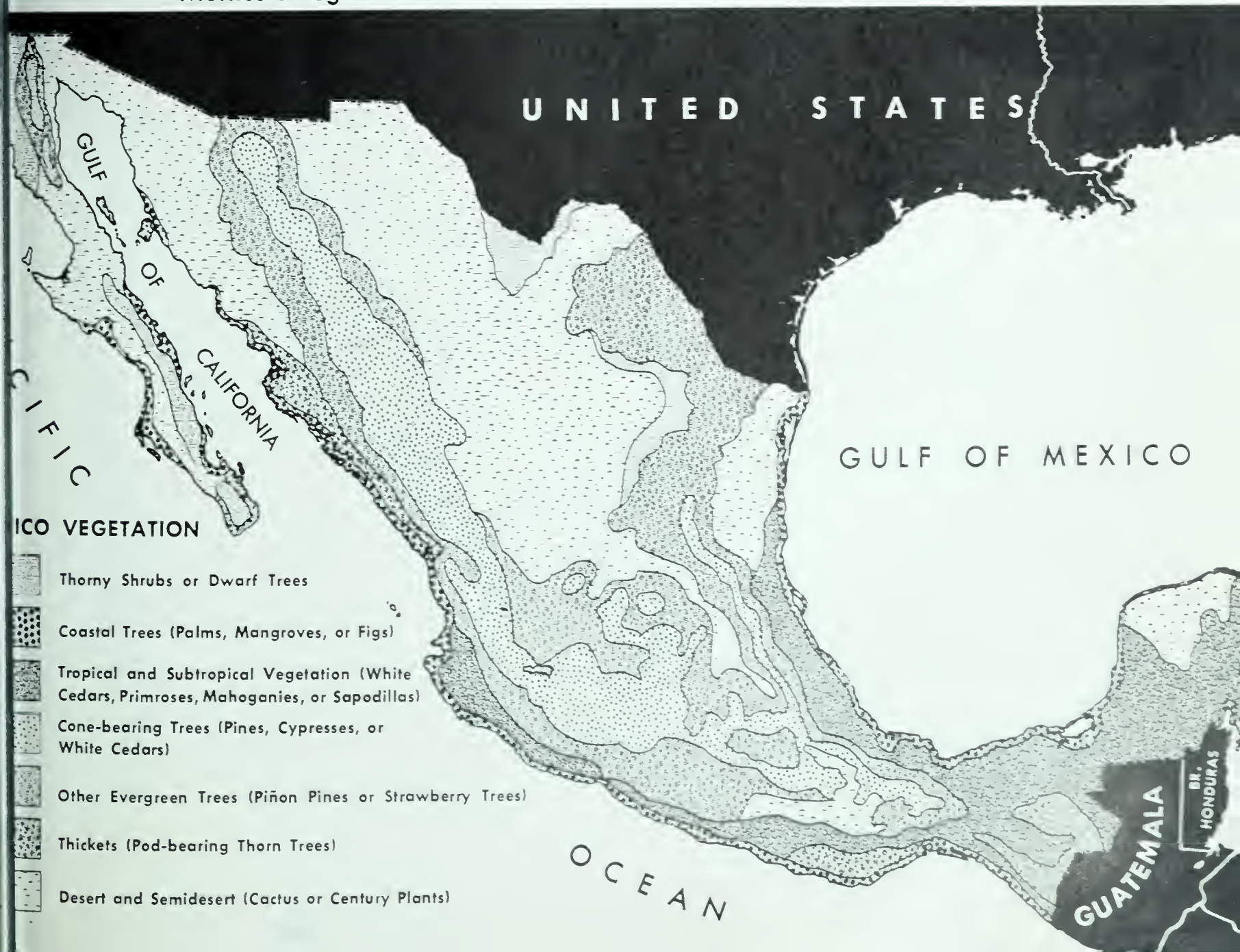
The map on page 63 shows that about one sixth of Mexico is covered with forests. Very dense tropical forests are found in the hot, wet, coastal regions. Most of the southern half of Mexico is wooded. From these many forests pine, fir, cedar, oak, bamboo, magnolia, mahogany, and other kinds of lumber are obtained. Mahogany and other hardwoods are valuable for making furniture. The softwoods are used in Mexico's paper mills. Another valuable product of Mexico's forests is chicle.* This is an elastic-like substance used to make chewing gum. Lumber and chicle are important exports.

In the past most of Mexico's lumber and minerals were sold to the United States and other countries. This was done because Mexico had very few factories that could change these raw materials into finished products. Much of this forest and mineral wealth is still exported. But more and more factories are being built in Mexico. These factories will use more of Mexico's raw materials. More people will be needed to work in the mines, forests, and factories. Then the workers of Mexico will be able to earn a better living.

DO YOU KNOW

1. What metals did the ancient Indians mine in Mexico?
2. Look at the map on page 58 and locate those parts of Mexico in which most of the metal deposits are found.
3. On this map locate Mexico's oil fields.
4. What are you able to learn about Mexico's forests from the map on page 63?

Mexico's vegetation. About one sixth of Mexico is covered with forests.





CHAPTER NINE

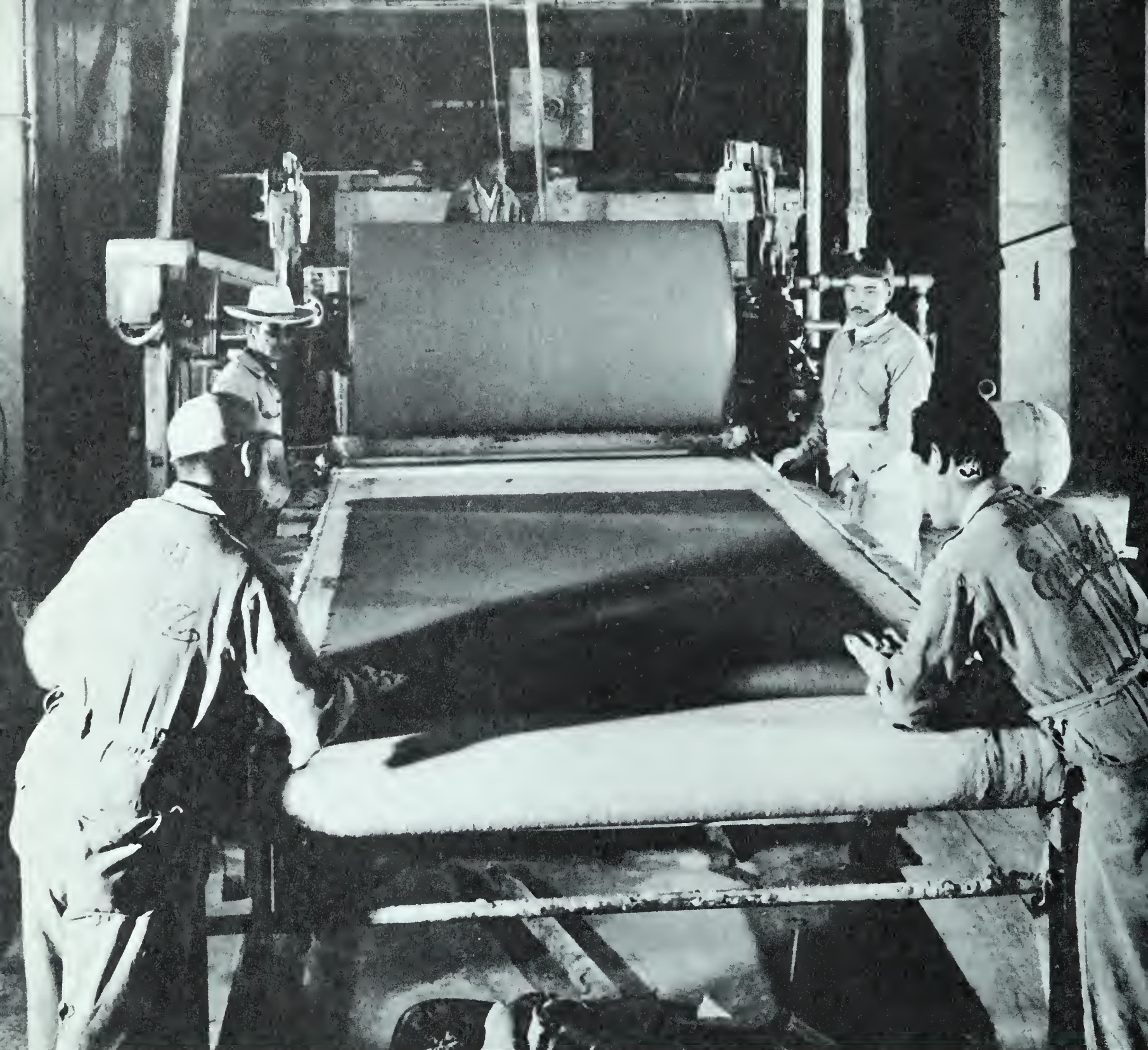
INDUSTRY IN MEXICO

Mexico is not an industrial nation like the United States. Three fourths of the people of Mexico use little or no manufactured goods. Many of these people live in small villages which are separated from the outside world by mountains or jungles. They have almost no contact with the people or the customs of the modern cities. They have never formed the habit of using manufactured goods. Village craftsmen make by hand almost everything they use. They even make furniture, blankets, dishes, and tools. Many village people now buy factory-made cloth to make their clothing. But many still spin their own cotton or wool and weave their own cloth.

The city people have always used manufactured goods. For many years small Mexican factories have made fabrics, shoes, bricks, and cement. Large modern companies make paper, flour, wine, beer, and cigarettes. There are many oil and sugar refineries. Gold and silver have been mined and worked since long before the conquest. But Mexico has always had to buy many manufactured products from other countries.

World War II brought new business problems to the country. Goods bought from other countries cost more and were harder to get. The growing population needed more food and goods than the country could supply. Mexico had to develop her own industries in order to get the goods she needed. She also needed to make the best use of her own raw materials.

Many new factories have been started in the last few years. Some of the new companies became associated with foreign firms.



A rubber factory. In the last few years many new factories have been started in Mexico.

They wanted to learn new methods from these firms. They also wanted to get the right to make the products patented by the foreign companies.

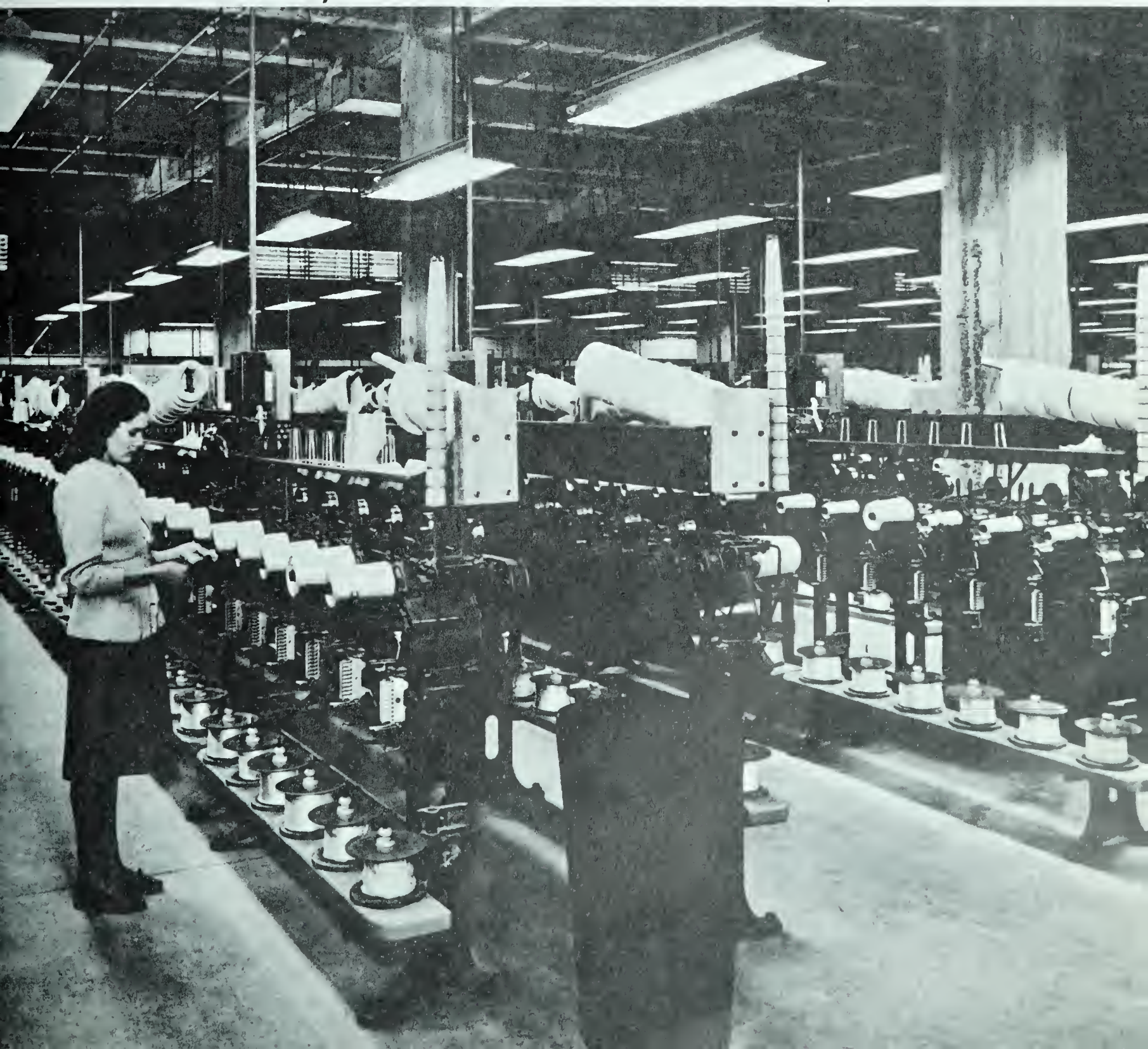
Mexican factories now make many kinds of products. Some plants make electrical equipment. Some manufacture or assemble machinery, farm equipment, tractors, trucks, or automobiles. There are others that make tin cans for the food-processing plants.

Some make fertilizers* that are needed to enrich Mexico's soil. Still others make paints, plastics, and many other things that Mexico used to import.

Mexico's older industries are growing too. The steel mills, sugar refineries, and paper mills have expanded. The textile industry has grown most of all and is far ahead of all other industries in value of production.

The mines, forests, and farms of Mexico supply her factories with many kinds of raw materials. Factories need power to run

The textile industry leads all other Mexican industries in value of production.

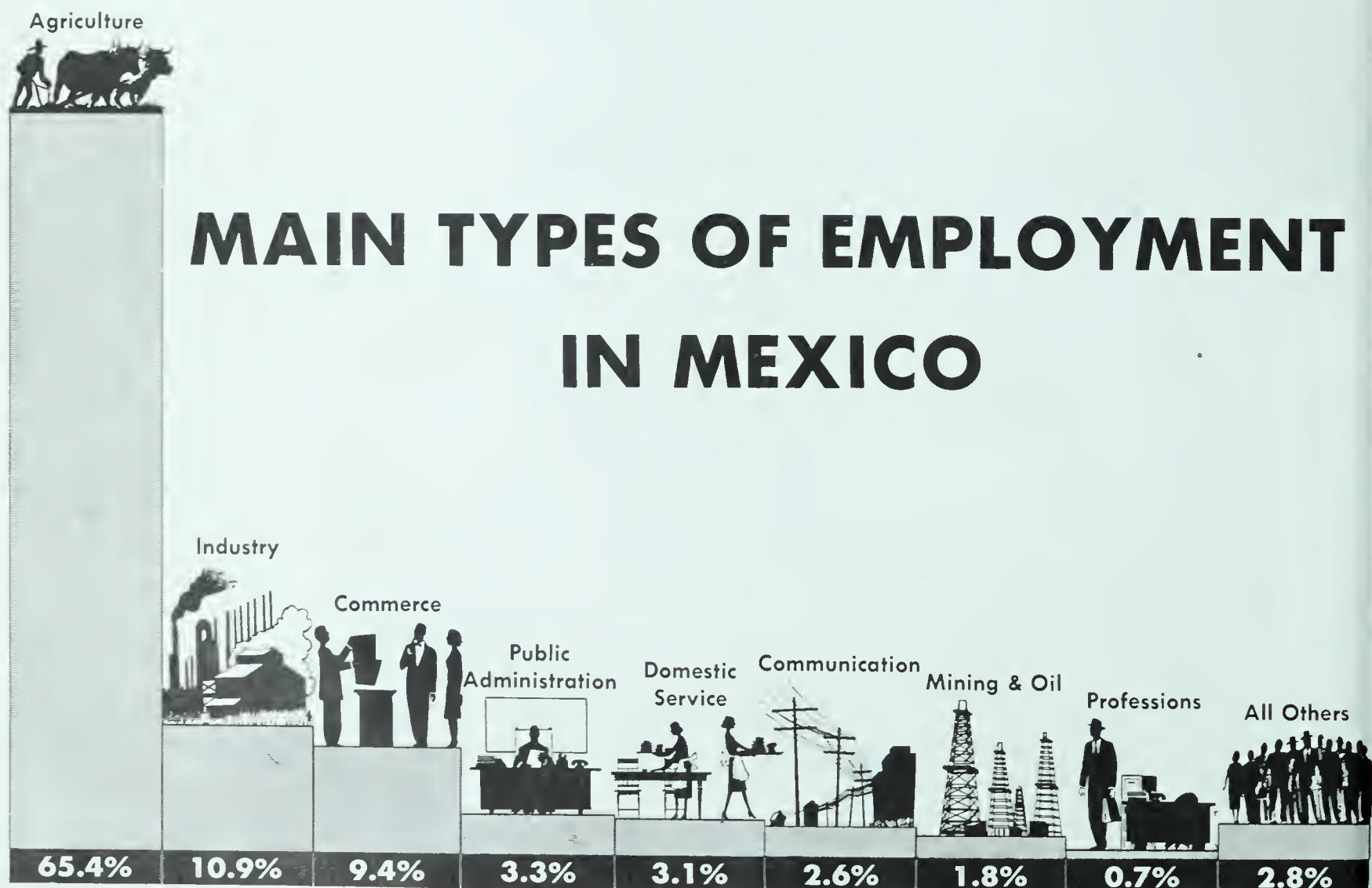


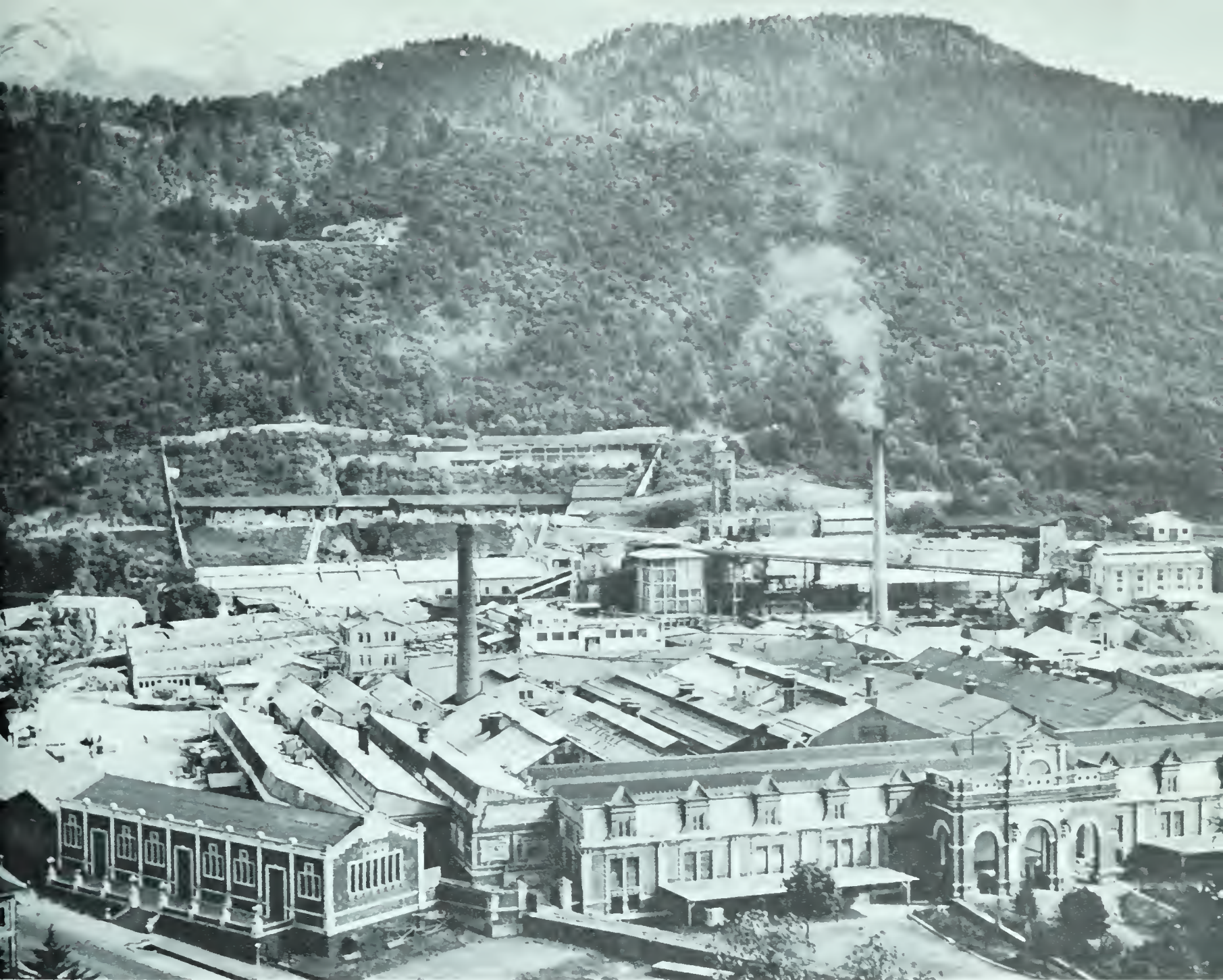
their machines. Mexico has plenty of oil to provide power for its machines, but has very little coal. Most of the electrical power is supplied by hydroelectric plants.

Although industry is developing, it will be many years before Mexico becomes an industrial nation. Now very few workers are employed in manufacturing and mining. Most of the working people still work on farms and ranches. (See graph below.) If the factories are to grow and produce more and more products, they must be able to sell these products. They must find a way to sell them to those people who now use little or no manufactured goods.

At present these people do not feel the need for factory-made products. They do not have enough money for buying luxuries.

More Mexicans are employed in agriculture than in any other occupation.





A paper mill. Industry will grow as the people can afford to buy more factory-made goods.

Most of these farmers see no point in raising surplus crops when there is no place to sell them. When roads are built into the back country, the farmers will be able to take their crops out to city markets. Then they will raise surplus crops to sell. When they have more money, perhaps they will begin to buy manufactured goods. Only then can Mexico become a real industrial nation.

DO YOU KNOW

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. How did World War II help Mexico's industry to develop? | 3. Why hasn't Mexico become a great industrial nation? |
| 2. What does the chart on page 68 tell you about the work the people do? | 4. How will the building of roads help Mexico's industries? |



Old and new means of transportation are used in Mexico.

CHAPTER TEN

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

When you think of traveling or sending freight, most of you think only of cars, planes, trains, or ships. In Mexico you will see all these modern means of transportation, just as in your own country. But you will also see more primitive ways.

Transportation is one of Mexico's biggest problems. Some regions are quite cut off from the rest of the country by high

mountains, canyons, or jungles. There, if the land is not too rough, people haul their produce* in wooden-wheeled carts drawn by two oxen. In many places there aren't even cart roads. The villages are connected only by winding trails. Here people carry their produce to market on their own backs or on burros. Sometimes the load a man carries on his back weighs more than he does. He balances the load on his back and shoulders, as shown in the picture on page 72. And he holds it in place with the help of a strap across his forehead.

An oxcart is used to haul produce* in isolated regions where the land is not too rough.



Important crops, such as coffee and tobacco, are carried by “mule train.” The mules are tended by men called *arrieros* (ah re AYE rohs). Mule-train routes wind through jungles and mountains and little villages. In some of these villages there are odd little hotels called *mesones* (may SOHN ays). A *meson* has a big corral, or pen, with sheds and water troughs for the animals. Around the corral and opening into it are a few small rooms for travelers. Usually this is the only kind of inn you will find in regions where everyone travels on horseback. This is the horse-country version of the motor court.

Many people carry products to market on their backs and on burros.





The mountainous country makes road and railway building very expensive in Mexico.

It is the broken, mountainous country that makes Mexico's transportation problem so great. It is very difficult to build good roads and railways through towering mountains and deep canyons. Building bridges and trestles* and tunneling through mountains takes great engineering skill. It also costs millions of dollars. Mexico has several railway lines. These serve mainly the capital and other important cities. It would take many more



A train stop. Mexico has several railway lines, but they connect only the main cities.

miles of track and much modern equipment to make the railroads really useful to the whole country.

As the map on page 76 shows, there are also many fine highways connecting the cities and resort towns of Mexico. In the last few years, the government has built a good many roads into the back country. Now you can go by car to many towns that could be reached only by days of traveling on horseback a few years ago. Perhaps the finest road in Mexico is the Pan American Highway. It runs the length of the country from Texas to Guatemala.*

Mexico has several fine seaports for overseas shipping, but there is almost no river transportation. Only a few of the rivers are deep

enough for large boats to travel, even for short distances. There are motor launches on big Lake Chapala.* But on the slow-moving jungle rivers people still use dugout canoes and carry produce on barges.

In recent years the airplane has helped to solve Mexico's transportation problems. Besides the big airlines for international travel, there are many local airlines. They carry passengers and freight to far-off towns and villages. A tiny valley a week's horseback ride away from any highway, and without a cart road, may have regular airplane service.

Air service is helping solve the transportation problem. Planes reach many isolated villages.



Because communication depends on transportation, that too is a problem. There is good mail service that covers the whole country, even where the mail must be carried on burros. The cities have Western Union for international telegraph service. The National Telegraph Company goes everywhere in Mexico, even to isolated towns. You can get mail and telegrams in a town that you have reached by riding a week on horseback. Telephone service connects all the large towns. In the back country, messages are often sent by runners or relayed through the markets.

DO YOU KNOW

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Why is transportation one of Mexico's biggest problems? | 3. How have airplanes helped solve Mexico's transportation problems? |
| 2. What are some of Mexico's primitive means of transportation? | 4. Describe the kinds of communication used in Mexico. |

Highways connect the cities and large towns of Mexico.





Monterrey* is a modern city in northern Mexico. It is an industrial center.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CITIES OF MEXICO

When the Spanish conquerors came to Mexico, they dreamed of building beautiful cities that would be as much as possible like those of Spain. But cities grow slowly. The character of a city depends on the land of which it is a part, as well as on the people who build it. All Mexican cities look a good deal like those of Spain. But they were built by both Spanish and Indian workers. The earth and stone and decorations of their buildings are Mexican. And their bright flowers and trees, and the encircling mountains are all ancient Mexico.



A central plaza* is found in every Mexican city. Usually a church faces one side of the plaza.

Every Mexican town has its own character and is different from every other city or town. But all of them are built on a similar plan. Both the Spanish and the Indians had always built their cities around a central *plaza**, or public square. So all Mexican towns, from tiny villages to the capital itself, grow around a central *plaza*. Smaller *plazas* and unexpected little parks are scattered throughout the large cities.

The central *plazas* of Mexico's cities and towns are not exactly alike, but they follow the same plan. Usually a beautiful old colonial church occupies one side of the *plaza*. Public buildings,

stores, and perhaps a hotel, fill the other sides. There are wide cement or stone walks with gay flower borders. There are always trees to shelter the *plaza*. There is often a fountain in the center of the square, or perhaps a bandstand surrounded by a paved area where young people dance at *fiesta** time.

Towns that have market day once a week usually hold the market in the open *plaza*. A few small stores take care of emergency needs between market days. But big cities have large, permanent markets. There is usually a big central market near the main *plaza*. Others are scattered throughout the city.

Market day in small towns is held once a week. The plaza is crowded with buyers and sellers.



The main part of a city market is a huge, barnlike building with a high roof supported by pillars. Inside, narrow aisles separate the various sections of the market. There is a section for each kind of produce. The stalls for the fish vendors are in one section, and those for the meat vendors are in another. Stalls for sellers of cheese, vegetables, fruit, and flowers are in still other sections.

Vendors of clothing, pottery, kitchen utensils and the like usually have gaily painted booths set up close together outside the main building. People with small odds and ends to sell spread their wares on the sidewalks. You can buy almost anything in a Mexican market.

The main building of a permanent city market is surrounded by small booths.





Modern and colonial buildings stand side by side in Mexico City.

You will notice many contrasts when you visit the cities of Mexico. Modern office buildings and stores may stand beside dignified old colonial buildings. Sometimes you will see a lovely old palace which has been remodeled inside to make room for small shops, a bank, or perhaps a restaurant. In the residential sections you will see fine old colonial homes with tall, narrow windows and wrought-iron balconies, half-hidden behind high, vine-covered walls. Next door there may be a new, modern house with bright awnings shading huge windows.



Guadalajara* is famous for its churches and colonial homes. It is Mexico's second largest city.

Mexico City, the capital, is the largest city in Mexico. Because it is so important and so different from other cities, it is described by itself in the next chapter. Guadalajara* is the second largest city. It is famous for its lovely colonial homes and its beautiful churches. It is the market center for the pottery made in nearby villages and for reed furniture.

Puebla,* too, still looks like a colonial city. Many of its old churches, public buildings, and homes are completely covered with designs made with colored glazed tile.* It is the home of Mexico's tile industry. Talavera* pottery, a beautiful kind of tableware, is also made here.

There are many other cities you will want to see when you go to Mexico. There is Monterrey,* one of Mexico's most modern industrial centers. There are also the gay tropical seaport of Veracruz* and the famous oil city, Tampico.* You may wish to swim at Acapulco* on the Pacific, and you must visit picturesque Taxco.* Here white *adobe** houses with red tile roofs and wooden balconies have been built against the mountainside. Their sunlit walls reflect the age and the beauty of Mexico.

DO YOU KNOW

1. What are some of the main features you would see in most Mexican cities?
2. With the help of the picture on page 78 describe the usual plan of a city *plaza*.
3. Describe a city market. What are some of the products sold there?
4. Which city would you most like to visit? Why?

Taxco* is a picturesque colonial town with red-tiled roofs and cobbled streets.





Mexico City* is one of the oldest cities in North America. It is the capital of Mexico.

CHAPTER TWELVE MEXICO CITY

If you were to visit Mexico City, you would see a great city in a beautiful valley. High, green mountains encircle it like a ring. The snow-capped peaks of “Popo”* and “The White Lady”* tower over them like guards.

Mexico City is never very hot nor very cold. Its high altitude keeps it from being hot, and because it is in the Torrid Zone* it is never very cold. Flowers bloom all year, and it has more days of sunshine than any other city in the world.

It is one of the oldest cities in America. The Aztecs* founded it in 1325. They called it Tenochtitlan.* The city was built on an island in a lake. Later the lake was drained and filled. Then the city grew in all directions. Now it covers more than half of the old lake bed. Cities that once stood on the shore of the lake are now suburbs of Mexico City.

This great, modern city of three million people is a mixture of the old and the new. Many beautiful old colonial churches and palaces are scattered among fine modern office and apartment buildings and homes. There are modern factories and shops. But

Mexico City has widely scattered business sections with many modern buildings and wide streets.





The Cathedral faces Mexico City's central plaza.* It was built on the ruins of an Aztec* temple.

there are also old-style markets where craftsmen sell their hand-made wares.

The center of the city stands on the old island site of Tenochtitlan. The big central *plaza**, called the Zócalo*(SOH kah loh), covers the old Temple Plaza of the Indian city. Mexico City's beautiful cathedral was built on the ruins of the main temple of the Aztecs. On another side of the *plaza*, where the palace of the Aztec kings once stood, is the great National Palace. This was started in the time of Cortes. Today it covers an area of about two city blocks. In this building are government offices and



The Alameda* is one of the city's beautiful parks. It is in the center of the business district.

national archives.* Here also is a museum in which you can see many of the art treasures of Mexico's people. Some of the Indian works of art are over two thousand years old.

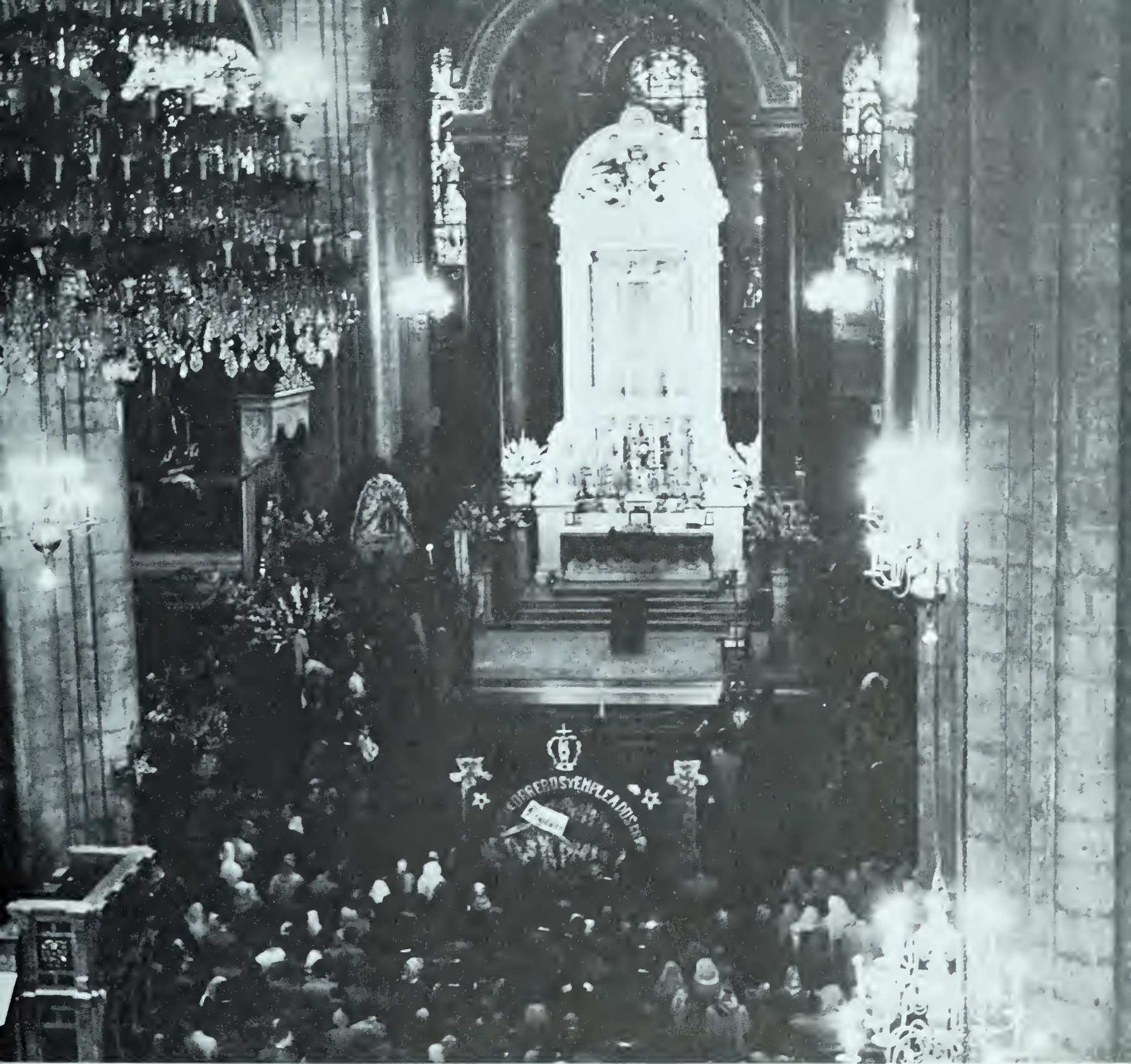
The city has many lovely parks. The Alameda,* which was once surrounded by homes, is now in the center of the business district. Now the residential part of the city completely surrounds big Chapultepec Park,* which used to be in the country. This park has a tiny lake where people go boating. There are drives and bridle paths, a zoo and a branch of the Museum of Natural History. And there is the old castle.

Long ago the kings of Tenochtitlan had a rest palace on this hill. After the conquest, one of the Spanish viceroys* built a new castle on the site of the old Aztec palace. Later it was the home of Emperor Maximilian* and Empress Carlota.* Some of their furniture is still in the castle. After that, it was the home of Dictator Porfirio Díaz.* Then all the Mexican presidents lived there until Lázaro Cárdenas.* Cárdenas turned it into a national museum. The Paseo de la Reforma,* one of the most beautiful avenues in the world, connects Chapultepec Park with the center of the city.

In a northern suburb of the city is the lovely Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe.* This beautiful church has decorations of pure gold and silver. It was built at the place where the Virgin, with a dark Indian face, appeared to a poor Indian in 1531. She is

Chapultepec* Castle and a small lake for boating are in big Chapultepec Park.





The Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe* honors Mexico's patron saint.

Mexico's patron saint. On her feast day, December 12, thousands of people come from all over the country to pray at her shrine. This is perhaps the most important shrine in the Americas.

Northeast of the city, about an hour's drive, are the three great pyramids of Teotihuacán.* This was a religious center of the early Indians.

South of the city are Xochimilco's* famous Floating Gardens,* where you can drift on flower-decked boats among the little islands. Here the people of Xochimilco raise flowers and vegetables for the city markets.

You must not leave the city without seeing the fine murals*and the paintings at the big Palace of Fine Arts. Here, almost any day you will see whole families of village people as well as city people looking at the paintings. For all Mexicans love beauty and appreciate their arts. Perhaps that is why there is so much beauty in Mexico.

DO YOU KNOW

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Why is Mexico City never very hot nor very cold? | 3. What is the Zócalo? Describe some of the buildings surrounding it. |
| 2. When was Mexico City founded? How was it founded? | 4. What important religious shrine is in a suburb of Mexico City? |

The Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City contains many paintings by Mexican artists.





A village on the high plateau. The streets are narrow and cobbled.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

LIFE IN A MEXICAN VILLAGE

Would you like to visit a Mexican village? We might go to an Indian town where the people still wear clothes much like their ancestors wore. We might visit a tropical village among the tall palm trees. Here the people live in bamboo houses with thick



A fountain in the village plaza*. Here the people get their water for household use.

thatched roofs. They get up at dawn to take their fishing nets down to the sea. But instead let us visit a typical Mexican village on the high plateau. Here some of the people are farmers, and some are pottery-makers.

Like all Mexican towns, this one is built around a big central square, or *plaza*,* which is shaded by laurel trees. In the center of the *plaza* is a fountain where the people get their water for household use. On one side of the square is a 16th century church. The front of the church is decorated with beautiful carvings. In the niche over the door is a statue of San Lorenzo, the patron saint of the village.

Across the square is the long, low building in which the mayor has his offices. On another side of the *plaza* are a few small shops. On the fourth side is the new government school. It has two playgrounds. One is for the boys and one is for the girls. In front of the school there is an open-air basketball court for the boys. There is no electricity in this village, so there are no radios and no motion pictures. But the new school has a machine that makes electricity just for that building. A new television set has been put in the school auditorium. Now the people can go to TV movies at the school.

Village houses have several rooms and are built around a central patio.*



Streets lead out in all directions from the *plaza*. Some of the streets are narrow and cobbled.* Here the houses are built very tight together. The front door of each house opens right onto the street. And hidden at the back of each is a garden. On the wider streets the houses have flower gardens in front. Low *adobe** walls keep the burros and pigs out of the gardens.

All the houses in the town are made of *adobe*. Some houses are bigger than others. But all of the houses have several rooms built around a central *patio*.* The *patio* is like an outdoor living-room. Around the walls are benches. Here the women grind their corn and cook in dry weather.

Making adobe* bricks. The heavy clay is shaped into bricks, which are dried in the sun.





A movable brasero. The village women cook on these little charcoal-burning stoves.

Since there is no electricity, houses are lighted with oil lamps and candles. The women cook on *braseros* (brah SAY rohs). These are little stoves in which charcoal is burned. In a large house, a cement *brasero* is built in the kitchen. But most people use metal *braseros* that can be moved about.



Each family has an altar. A picture of the Virgin hangs above it.

There are a few handmade tables, chairs, and low stools in the homes. Some families have beds that were bought in the city. Others have made their beds by stretching ropes across a wooden frame. The ropes are then covered with a few straw mats instead of a mattress. These mats are called *petates*.^{*} Some people have no beds. They just spread their *petates* on the floor at night.

Each family has a household altar. A small table at one side of the room is covered with a lacy white cloth. A picture of the

Virgin is hung above the table. There are always candles and flowers on the altar. On religious feast days the family puts special decorations and offerings on the altar.

The Chavezes are farmers, so they have a vegetable garden and some fruit trees behind the house. At the far end of the garden there is a corral and a shed for the two oxen. After the day's work in his field, which is a mile from the village, Papa Chavez works in the garden. Manuel carries water from the fountain to fill the big water jars before he goes to play. His sister Juana is eight now, so she helps their mother make *tortillas*.* But Maria is only six, so her job is taking care of the baby.

The Solano family are pottery-makers. At the end of their large *patio* is a long room with wooden bins where they age their clay.

Village pottery-makers take pride in their work. Each piece is decorated with a pretty design.



There are long tables on which Mr. Solano and his son Jaime shape the clay into cooking pots and bowls. In a corner of the *patio* is a huge kiln, or oven, in which pottery is baked. After they dry in the sun, the raw clay vessels are baked for five or six hours. Then they are allowed to cool. Next, the Solanos dip each piece in thin red paint. Then they decorate each with a pretty design of flowers or animals. After this each piece is baked again for about twenty-four hours. When it is finished, a pottery bowl is strong enough to be set on the fire and used for cooking food.

The Limóns are the village bakers. They have a big oven built into the side of the kitchen. Every morning Papa Limón builds a big fire inside the oven to heat it. Then he keeps the oven hot with a charcoal fire. Here he bakes the hard rolls and the sweet cakes that everyone eats with chocolate or coffee for supper. All day long there is a smell of fresh bread in the Limón *patio*. In the evening the Limón children put the bread into baskets. They cover it with clean napkins and deliver it to their neighbors.

Tuesday is market day, so we should plan to visit the village on that day. The *plaza* is very gay. Squares of canvas are tied to tall poles on the sunny side of the *plaza*. The canvas protects the produce* that has been spread on straw mats. Papa Chavez is working in his cornfield. But Mama Chavez and the children are at the market. They have brought a bag of black beans and a few baskets of vegetables to sell. Across the *plaza*, the Solanos have their pottery laid out on *petates*. There are also tables spread with tempting sweet cakes, squares of fruit paste, and trays of candy. And there is a food booth like a tiny outdoor restaurant, so no one has to go home to cook dinner. Weavers have come from nearby villages with lovely *sarapes** and *rebozos** to sell.



Market day is a time for buying and selling. It is also a day for visiting and catching up on the news.

Village people work very hard for very little money. But they are cheerful and friendly and always ready to share what they have. They love their children and want big families, even if it means sacrifice and more work. Their life is hard, but they have love and religious faith. So they are usually happy, and life is good.

DO YOU KNOW

1. With the help of the pictures in this chapter, describe what you would see in a Mexican village of the high plateau region.
2. Describe what you might see in a village home.
3. On market day, what could you buy in the village market?
4. Tell how pottery is made and painted.

Market day is a time for buying and selling, and for catching up on the news.





Grinding corn. Soft, wet kernels of corn are ground on a flat stone.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MEXICAN FOOD

Long before the conquest, bread made of corn was the principal food of the Indians. They believed that corn was a gift from the old gods. When the Spaniards came, they too liked the Indians' flat corn cakes. These were called *tortillas*,* which means "little cakes." To this day, corn is the most important food in Mexico.

To make *tortillas*, the corn is well soaked in jars of limewater.* Then the women grind the wet, softened kernels on a flat stone,



Making tortillas.* Dough made from ground corn is patted into thin cakes and fried on a flat pan.

called a *metate* (meh TAH tay). Now and then they add a little water to keep it wet. They grind it until it becomes a smooth, doughy mass. Then they pat bits of this *masa* (MAH sah) into round, thin cakes and toast them on a big, flat pan over the fire.

There are mills for the grinding of corn in the cities and in many villages. At the mill the women can have their corn ground in a few minutes, instead of working many hours at the grinding stone.

But in thousands of homes in Mexico, the *masa* is still made on the *metate*, just as it was before the conquest. Even where there are mills, many people grind their corn on the *metate* because such *masa* makes much better *tortillas*. Usually *tortillas* are made

of white or yellow corn. The women save the red and blue ears to make *tortillas* or *tamales** for special feast days.

Tamales are made by mixing meat and chopped chili* with corn *masa*. This is wrapped in cornhusks or banana leaves and steamed. A *taco* (TAH coh) is made by wrapping chopped meat in a *tortilla* and frying it. Sometimes a rolled *tortilla* is filled with meat, cheese, onions, and chili, then baked in a spicy sauce. This is called an *enchilada* (en chee LAH dah). These are things the Mexicans eat as you eat hot dogs and hamburgers.

Next to corn, Mexico's most important food is brown or black beans. They are boiled with herbs in a big earthen pot. Sometimes the boiled beans are crushed and fried and served with grated goat cheese. The highland people also grow a special kind of large, many-colored beans. They call them "Christmas Eve"

Eating tacos. A taco is made by wrapping chopped meat in a tortilla and frying it.



beans. There is a tradition that if you eat them on Christmas Eve, you will have plenty to eat all the next year.

Most Mexicans, especially village people, eat lots of chili peppers. These are rich in vitamins. They eat them raw or pickled. They also use them to season food. Mexicans raise many spices and herbs for seasoning sauces. When Cortes*arrived in Tenochtitlan*, the emperor Moctezuma*served him a fine dinner of turkey. The turkey had been boiled in a delicious sauce. This sauce, called *mole* (MOH lay), is made of chocolate, several kinds of chili, and many spices. Twenty-four different ingredients are put into the sauce when it is properly made. To this day, turkey *mole* is the Mexican national dish, just as it was in Aztec*times.

Preparing chocolate. Mexicans, like their Indian ancestors, drink lots of chocolate.





Picking cactus blossoms. Mexicans use the cactus blossoms in flavoring food.

Mexicans have all the usual vegetables and fruits. They also have several kinds that do not grow in colder countries. They eat both the fruit and the leaves of the nopal cactus.* Their favorite salad is *guacamole* (gwah cah MOH lay). It is made of avocados,* crushed and mixed with herbs.

Mexico has wonderful tropical fruits, such as the zāpote* and papaya,* pineapples, bananas, and mangoes.* There are some of these fruits in season the whole year.

prickly pear
guacamole fruit

some of these fruits



Serving chicken and rice. Many Mexicans living in the cities eat the same foods you do.

Like their Indian ancestors, Mexicans drink lots of chocolate. It is flavored with vanilla or cinnamon. Then it is beaten with a wooden beater until it is smooth and frothy. Vanilla-flavored chocolate was Moctezuma's favorite drink.

Perhaps the strangest foods in Mexico are roasted iguana* (tropical lizards) and the large, white slugs that live in maguey* plants. These are fried crisp and served in a *taco* or with *guacamole*. Many Mexicans do not like these foods.

If you should visit Mexico, you would find that most people living in the cities eat the same kinds of food that you do. But

they eat at different hours of the day. They have a big breakfast, and a really huge dinner at two or three o'clock. In the evening, about nine o'clock, they have coffee or chocolate with sweet cakes. However, in poor agricultural districts village people live largely on corn, beans, rice, and chili. Sometimes they have meat, vegetables, fruit, or goat cheese—but not every day. They get along surprisingly well and do a great deal of work on this limited diet.

DO YOU KNOW

1. What is the most important food in Mexico today?
2. How do Mexican women make *tortillas*?
3. What is the second most important food eaten in Mexico?
4. Can you think of some reasons that may explain why most of the village people live largely on corn and beans?

An outdoor kitchen. Village people live largely on corn, beans, rice, and chili.





The everyday dress of the men outside the cities is white cotton pants and white shirts.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

DRESS OF THE PEOPLE

When you travel through Mexico, one of the most interesting things you will see is the colorful dress of the people. Of course, in the cities people dress just as people do in our own cities. But when you go to the villages, especially into the remote Indian regions, you will see many varied and beautiful costumes.

The everyday dress of the *mestizos campesinos** (country people) is almost the same all over the country. The men wear white pants of heavy cotton, and white muslin* shirts with open collars. They

usually wear bright-colored kerchiefs around their necks. In some regions the shirt hangs loose outside the pants. In some places a man pulls the shirttail around his waist and knots it in front. In other places he tucks in the shirttail and winds a wide red or blue sash around his waist.

Nowadays some of the village men who live near the capital wear leather jackets. But most of them still wear *sarapes*.* A *sarape* is a wool blanket which sometimes has a slit in the center to put the head through. It makes a warm, waterproof cloak for daytime use, and a blanket for the bed at night. *Sarapes* are made in many designs and with many colors. Every region has its own traditional style. These have been copied for centuries from the designs of the cotton cloaks of their Indian ancestors.

Sarapes* are still worn by most village men. They are made in many designs and colors.





All village men wear straw *sombreros*.* Any kind of hat is called a *sombrero*. Men in the south wear *sombreros* with flat brims and low crowns. In the north their *sombreros* have tall, peaked crowns and wide, rolled brims. In every region there is some difference in the style of crown, brim, or chin strap. Texas cowboy hats are copied after those of northern Mexico.

Village women wear full, bright-colored cotton skirts that reach to their ankles. Their high-necked blouses usually match the skirt. Sometimes for *fiestas** they wear white, low-necked blouses with embroidered yokes and short sleeves. A woman's shawl is called a *rebozo**(ray BOH soh). It is about four yards long and a yard wide. The ends are fringed. The *rebozo* serves as a head covering and a wrap. It also may be used as a sling for carrying a baby or a heavy bundle. A *rebozo* is worn in different ways and varies in color and design in different regions. The commonest ones are dark red, blue, or brown, mixed with white. In some places *rebozos* are of gayer colors with complicated designs.

Most men and women of the villages wear handmade sandals. These also vary in style in the different regions. A good many people in the warm and hot lands go barefoot.

In Indian regions, there is a much greater variety in dress. Every tribe has always had its own costume. In each tribe the white pants are different in some way. They may be tied in at the ankles or cut off above the knees. Some are decorated with blue or red embroidery. Each tribe has a special style of pleated or embroidered shirt that is different from that of any other tribe.

Their *sarapes* are quite varied. Sometimes the difference is only in color and design. In some places they sew up the sides of the *sarape* and fringe the bottom. In others they fasten the

sides together with loops and attach little sleeve flaps over the shoulders.

All Mexican Indians wear sandals and beautiful hand-woven belts. Even their straw hats are gayer than *mestizo* hats. They are always decorated. The hats may have bright woven bands and chin cords, or they may have gay ribbon streamers. Some are decorated twice a day with fresh tropical flowers.

There are even more differences in the dress of the Indian women. In some tribes the long skirts are gathered onto belts. More often an Indian woman's skirt is a strip of cotton or wool cloth, four to eight yards long. Every time she dresses, she wraps it around her waist and ties it with a sash. The way she wraps the

Indian clothing is gay and colorful. Each tribe has its own costume.





Indian women. According to tribal custom these women gather their skirts all around the waist.

skirt depends on her tribe. Some tribes pleat the fullness neatly all the way around the waist. Some fold the extra material in front. In other tribes it is folded in the back.

The blouses of Indian women may be long and decorated with embroidery, or they may be very simple and worn with a hand-woven belt. Many Indian women wear tribal headdresses, but some wear *rebozos*. Most of them wear lots of jewelry. Some of

their jewelry is made of gold and silver. Some of it is made of coral, shell, and carved bone.

DO YOU KNOW

1. Describe the dress of the *mestizo* men in Mexico's villages.
2. How do the *mestiza* women of the villages dress?
3. How do the Indian men and women in Mexico dress?
4. Describe a *rebozo*. What are some of its uses?

The blouse of an Indian woman may be long and decorated with embroidery.





Weaving baskets. Mexican craftsmen feel that even ordinary things can be beautiful.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE HANDICRAFTS

In Mexico the village people make by hand almost everything they use. They make their own furniture. They weave beautifully designed bags and blankets. And they make their own sandals, hats, and baskets. Village craftsmen make gaily decorated dishes and cooking vessels, and lovely lacquered* trays, bowls, and boxes. All over the country there are “craft” villages, where almost everyone works at the same craft. The people of one village are



Silver workers. Mexicans love and respect the crafts handed down to them by their ancestors.

potters. Those of another village are weavers. And in another village they do lacquer work. Craftsmen sell what they make to neighboring villagers and sometimes to the city people.

It is true that many of these villages are in remote parts of Mexico where they do not have factory-made things. But other craft villages are only a few miles from the big cities with their stores and markets. It is true, too, that many village people do not have much money with which to buy things in stores. But even those that do, take time to make beautiful things by hand.

One of the reasons the villagers still work at their crafts is that their people have always made things by hand. Mexicans have a

great respect for tradition. They respect and love the customs, the way of living, and the crafts handed down to them by their ancestors.

A more important reason is that they love beauty, and they like to create things that are beautiful. Even useful things can be made beautiful. A cooking pot is just as useful when it is plain and dull. But when it is painted a pretty color and decorated with odd little animals or a neat design, it is beautiful too. When they look at

Making pottery. Mexican villagers make by hand almost everything they use.



such a pot, they feel happy. And the beans they cook in it taste better. Although each region has its traditional colors and designs, no two objects are ever made exactly alike. The decoration is changed just a little to make each blanket or bowl or lacquered gourd * a special work of art.

Mexican craftsmen make many things just for pleasure. They make cloth dolls and wood and pottery toys for the children. Pictures made of straw or feathers often hang on the wall. They make jewelry of gold, silver, coral, shell, and semiprecious stones. When they are ill, they make tiny silver images called *milagros*,* for the Virgin as prayers. When she cures them, they paint pictures to thank her.

The Indians worked at all these crafts long before the Spaniards came to Mexico. But Indian weavers had only cotton, maguey,*

Handmade dolls. Village craftsmen make toys of cloth, wood, and pottery for children.





A lacquered* tray. The Mexican style of decoration is a blend of the Spanish and Indian.

and palm fibers. The Spaniards brought sheep, so there was wool for weaving. They brought upright looms, which were better for weaving wool than the Indians' horizontal looms.* The Spanish introduced glass-making, tin and iron work, and new kinds of furniture. For decoration, the Spanish made delicate, lifelike flowers and animals. The Indians made bold, odd-shaped creatures and geometric designs.* Soon these two styles were combined to make something purely Mexican. But the methods of work and the uses and importance of the handicrafts did not change.

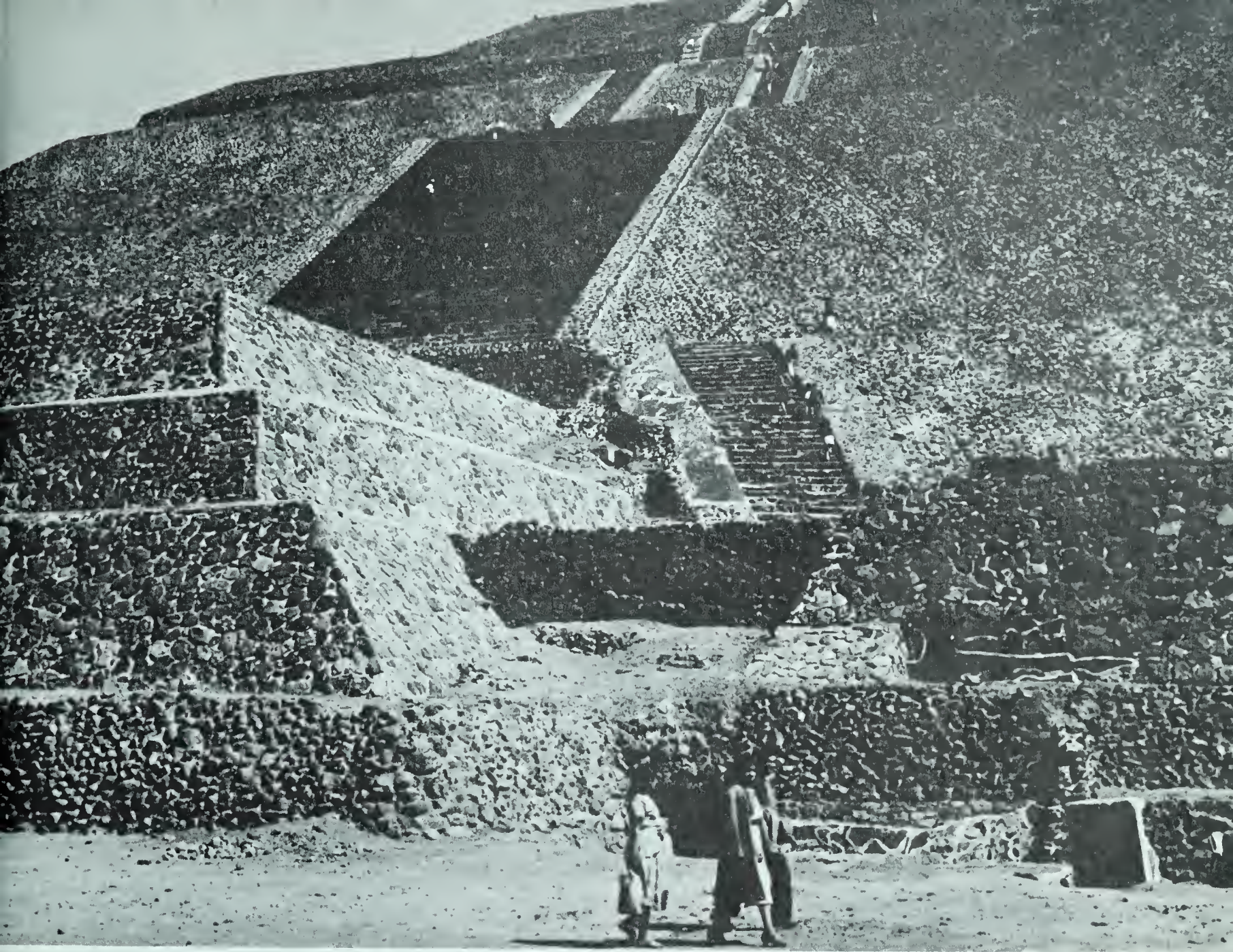
Many hand-made articles can be bought only in the regions where they are made. But in the big city markets and stores, you can buy many things which have been brought from the villages. You can buy pottery, baskets, and lacquered trays. You can also buy *sarapes*,* *rebozos*,* woven straw mats, and toys. Some of these things in the city markets are only novelties, made for tourists. But even city people buy some hand-made things.

— DO YOU KNOW —

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Why do the village people make by hand almost everything they use? | 3. What crafts are carried on just for the pleasure they give? |
| 2. What crafts did the Spanish teach the Mexicans? | 4. What are "craft" villages? Why are many of them near large cities? |

Pottery and other articles made by village craftsmen can be bought in city markets.





The Pyramid of the Sun was built long before the Spanish came to Mexico.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

MEXICO'S FINE ARTS

A people's art usually grows to be like the land. Mexico's sunshine is more brilliant than that of the cold countries. The colors of her flowers, birds, and even the earth are bright and varied. So her art is brilliant and varied, too.

There is great variety in Mexican architecture. The pre-conquest Indians of the high plateau built small temples on top of big, solid, flat-topped pyramids. Some pyramids were huge and massive, like



A Mayan* temple. The Mayans decorated the outside of their temples with carvings.

the Pyramid of the Sun. Some were smaller and completely covered with carving. The little temples are gone now, but the pyramids are as solid as ever. The Mayan* architects built great palaces and temples with many columns and arches. They decorated them outside with intricate, beautiful carving. On the walls of the rooms they painted pictures of historical events and important ceremonies.

Both Aztec* and Mayan palaces were of stone and were built around a *patio*,* or central court. Ordinary homes were usually

made of *adobe** brick. But in the hot jungle country, houses were often made of bamboo, with thick roofs of grass and palm leaves.

When the Spanish came the Indian temples were destroyed or deserted, and they began to build churches. The first Spanish churches were solid, thick-walled buildings (See picture below.) that served as monasteries and fortresses as well as churches. The facade* was decorated with delicate carvings. As architectural style in Spain changed, the style in Mexico changed too. Through the centuries it became more and more elaborate, until facade and altar pieces were covered with solid carving. (See picture page 86.) But in Mexico, Indian and *mestizo** sculptors carved the decorations. So, while these buildings are Spanish in form, the

An early church. The first Spanish churches also served as monasteries and fortresses.



angels and saints are strong, sharp Indian figures. This style of architecture is called "Mexican colonial."

Palaces and homes did not change so much when the Spanish came. People continued to build with stone and *adobe*. Indians and Spanish were both used to the *patio*, so that is still a Mexican style. But the Spanish knew how to work iron, and the Indians soon learned. So Mexican colonial homes, like those in Spain, had lovely wrought-iron balconies, stairways, and gates.

Today, in Mexico's large cities, there are many buildings of very modern style. They are plain, "functional," many-windowed buildings, like the modern architecture of our own country. But the churches and most of the homes are still like those built in colonial times. Many jungle people still make their houses of bamboo. That is because most Mexicans do not like change. Also, bamboo

A patio.* All Mexican colonial buildings were built around a central patio.





A Mayan painting. Early Indians painted pictures on the walls of temples and palaces.

houses belong in the jungle, and the rich, colonial-style houses belong in the colorful, mountainous land of Mexico.

Pre-conquest artists painted fine pictures on the walls of temples and palaces. They used bright colors, and the figures were strong rather than just pretty. Their paints and their method of painting on walls were so good that many of the old murals* have lasted to this day. The picture above shows a mural painted by Mayan artists over a thousand years ago.

The only “paintings” these Indian artists made to hang on the walls were done with feathers instead of paint. Birds were hunted or raised for their bright, many-colored feathers. The artist sorted



A Modern Mexican painting. Mexican artists use strong colors like those of their Indian ancestors.

the colors and used them as he would paints. He drew the picture on a square cloth. Then he fixed the tiny feather tips in place, one by one, with a bit of glue, to fill in the picture with the proper colors. Sometimes, for shading, he would use single barbs of the colored feathers.

The artists made religious and historical scenes and even portraits with feathers. They also made beautiful feather cloaks of intricate design for the rulers and nobles. It took several years to make such a cloak. The art of doing this fine feather work was

lost long ago. Now a few village craftsmen make little pictures for their walls, but these do not represent the fine work of the early artists.

After the conquest the Spanish rulers brought many painters from Spain. They wanted real European paintings for their churches. Also, they wanted the European artists to teach the

Each mural * painting tells a story about Mexican life or history.





A mural by Diego Rivera. In Mexico's public buildings there are murals picturing Mexican history.

mestizo Mexicans to paint in the Spanish style. So for a long time Mexican artists painted delicate, pretty pictures. None of them were very important artists because they were copying a European style instead of painting as Mexicans.

But after the Revolution of 1910, young artists began to paint in a completely different style that is truly Mexican. These modern Mexican painters use strong Indian colors and paint odd-shaped figures much like those painted by their Indian ancestors. They have revived mural painting and made it famous.

Today Mexico probably has more great painters than any other country in the world. Almost all of her public buildings are decorated with beautiful murals showing her history. These have been painted by Mexico's greatest mural painters.

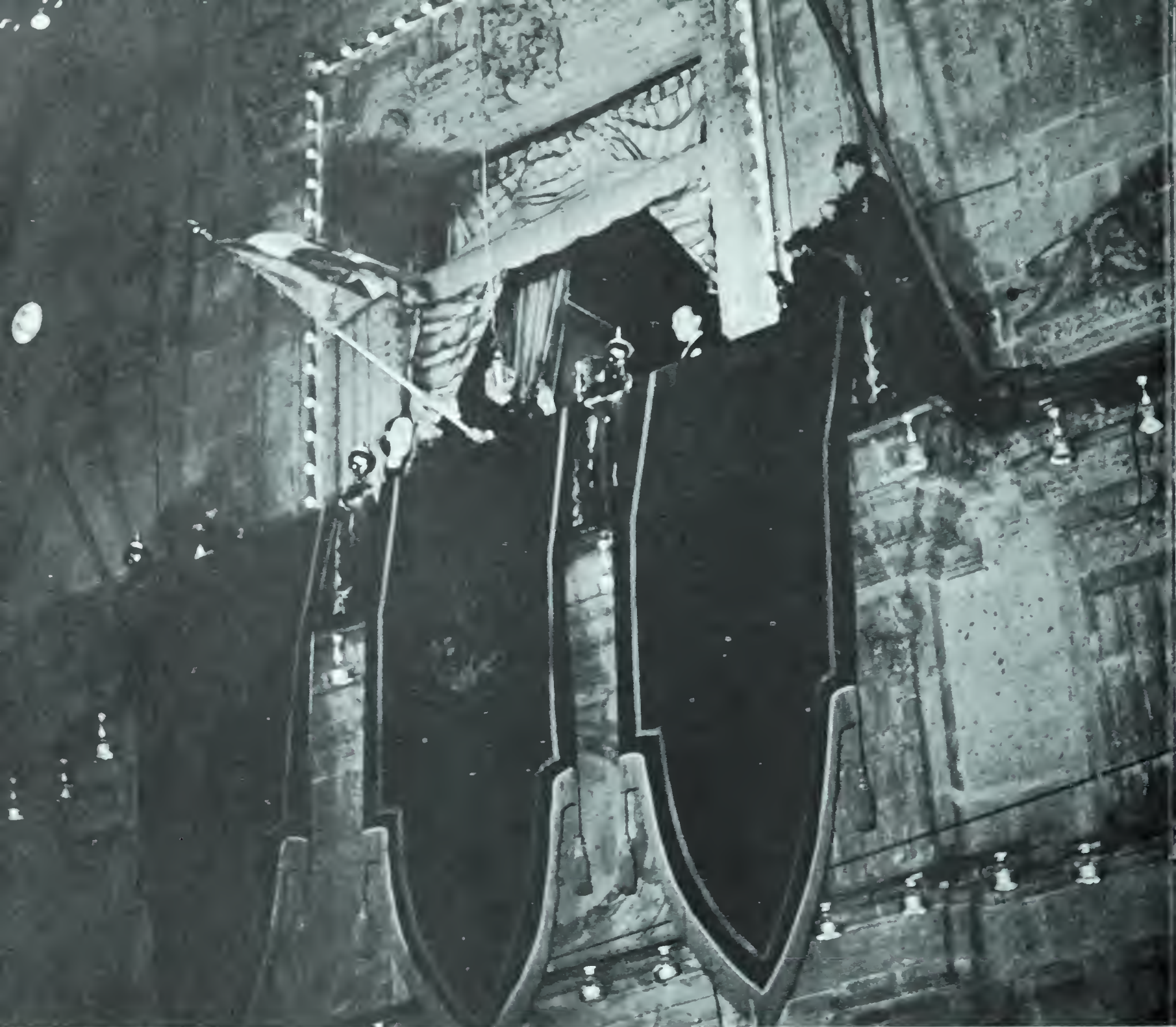
Mexico has fine jewelry-makers, sculptors, dancers, and musicians. And she has some of the most beautiful architecture on earth. But when we think of Mexican arts, we always think of her great and famous painters.

DO YOU KNOW

1. Select three pictures in this book which you think best illustrate the arts of the Indians before the coming of the Spaniards.
2. How were feathers used by the early Indian artists?
3. How has Mexican painting changed since the Revolution of 1910?

Ballet dancers act out an Indian story. Mexico has fine dancers, sculptors, and musicians.





Night of the Grito.* In Mexico City the president gives the Grito from the Palace balcony.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN MEXICO'S FIESTAS

Mexico, like the United States, has a great celebration on its Independence Day. On September 16, 1810, the people began their fight for freedom from Spain. But Father Hidalgo* gave the *Grito** (the Cry) for independence and the call to arms at eleven o'clock

on the night of the fifteenth. So on the night of the *Grito* every village in Mexico has a *fiesta*.^{*} It ends at eleven o'clock, when the mayor repeats the famous words of Father Hidalgo. Mexico City^{*} has no *fiesta* on this night, but thousands of people gather in the Zócalo^{*} to hear the president give the *Grito* from the balcony of the palace. The next day there are parades and patriotic speeches in the large cities.

Most *fiestas* are religious feast days. The gayest one is the four-day Carnival, like the Mardi Gras,^{*} just before Lent. The biggest *fiesta* in any village is the celebration of its "Saint's Day," which is the birthday of its patron saint. This *fiesta* lasts four to ten days, depending on the size of the town. Craftsmen from other

On Independence Day there are parades and speeches in the large cities.



villages come with handicrafts to sell in the market. At all fiestas there are fireworks and dancing in the *plaza*. There are also regional dances.* In early times these dances were part of the religious ceremonies of the Indians. Now they are danced for the Virgin or for the patron saint of the town.

The church feasts of All Saints* and All Souls,* held on November 1 and 2, are combined with the ancient Indian Day of the Dead.* The ancient Indians believed that the dead returned once a year to be fed. They had a special festival for the feeding of the dead. Indian and *mestizo** villagers still believe in this annual return of souls. All over Mexico people prepare special food for the dead. In some places the food is set out on the family

A fiesta in Tehuantepec.* Most fiestas* are religious feast days.





On the Day of the Dead* people all over Mexico set out special food for the dead.

altars. In others it is placed in the cemeteries. Everyone eats a special kind of bread called the "Bread of the Dead." Children have special sugar cakes and odd toys. One of these toys is a jack-in-the-box coffin that pops up a tiny skeleton. This festival is not a celebration of death. It is a happy time to welcome the souls of the dead who come back to visit their homes on earth.

The most beautiful festival of all is at Christmas. It begins on December 16, with the first day of the *Posadas*.* This period



A Posada* procession. The procession is led by a girl and a boy representing Mary and Joseph.

represents the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem and their search for an inn. On the sixteenth every family sets up a Nativity scene. A tiny stable is set against a background of flowers and evergreens. There are lovely little clay figures of the Holy Family, two angels, and the animals that belong in the stable. Nearby are the shepherds. At a little distance are the Wise Men, who, in Mexico, are called the Three Kings. Mary and Joseph kneel beside a tiny cradle. But the cradle remains empty until Christmas Eve.

In the villages, every night of the nine *Posada* days there is a procession of singers. The whole village takes part. The procession is led by a girl and a boy representing Mary and Joseph. Mary rides a burro and Joseph walks beside her. They wear long robes like those shown in pictures of the Holy Family. They go through the village singing the *Posada* songs.

Soon they stop at the door of a house where some of the people have gathered for their part of the ceremony. There they sing the special songs that ask for shelter and tell of the long journey and of how tired Mary is. The people in the house sing the answer,

Mexican children sing before the Nacimiento* on Christmas Eve, the last night of the *Posadas*.





“Go away, we have no room.” So the procession goes on to another house, but the answer is the same.

Every night the procession and the songs are repeated. But on Christmas Eve the answer is different. That night the people in the house tell them in song that they may sleep in the stable. The door opens and the people go in. Then the figure of the Christ Child is placed in the cradle of the *Nacimiento** on the household altar.

Just before midnight, they all take candles and bouquets of flowers and go through the streets to the church. There the figure of the Infant Jesus, in a little cradle, has been placed in front of the altar. The long procession of people with lighted candles comes into the dark church. The people file past the altar, singing a triumphant song of the birth of the Christ Child. They heap the flowers around the Child’s cradle and put their candles in the candle racks around the altar. Then they hear the Midnight Mass.

All during the *Posada* season, in city and village alike, there are *piñata* (peen YAH tah) parties. A *piñata* is a big clay jar filled with candies and small toys. It is covered with a papier-mâché* lamb, angel, or star. The *piñata* is hung in the *patio** by a rope so that it can be raised or lowered. Then the children take turns being blindfolded, and each tries to break the *piñata* with a big stick. At last someone breaks it, and the goodies and toys fall to the ground. All the children scramble for them. These are the only gifts they get until January 6. Then the Three Kings bring them gifts, as they did for the Christ Child so long ago.

DO YOU KNOW

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. How do the people of Mexico celebrate their Independence Day? | 3. Describe or draw a picture of a Nativity scene such as every family sets up in its home for the Christmas season. |
| 2. If you were in a Mexican village on December 16, what would you see? | 4. What is a <i>piñata</i> party? |

CHAPTER NINETEEN

EDUCATION IN MEXICO

Providing public education is one of the jobs in which the Mexican government has made the most progress. One of the main objects of the revolution that began in 1910 was to give free education to everyone. "Going to school" is something you take for granted, but it was a big problem in Mexico.

From colonial times right up to the revolution, all elementary education was provided by the Catholic church.* These schools were very good, but almost all of them were in the cities. Children in the villages and far-off regions had no schools at all. And not all of the city children could go to school either. Since the schools were privately owned, pupils had to pay to go there. Many could not afford to go. Besides, there were never enough schools, so only children of upper-class families could go to school.

After the revolution the new government started at once to build schools, in the back country as well as in the cities. By 1952 Mexico had about 25,000 primary schools. Of these, almost 20,000 are in rural areas. But that is not nearly enough. Even city schools are overcrowded, and every year some children have to be turned away. In rural districts, a single school often has to serve several villages. Many children walk or ride horseback two or three hours each day to go to school.

Now more than half of Mexico's children go to school. Before the revolution only one fourth of all Mexicans could read and write. Now three fifths can do so. That is a very big improvement. And the government is building more schools each year. In a few more years all Mexican children will be able to go to school.



One of the more serious problems of the Mexican government is that of finding enough teachers. There are several training schools for teachers. One fifth of the budget is spent on education. But it costs so much to build schools that there is very little money left for paying teachers. Because salaries are low, not enough young people want to become teachers.

Village schools have an especially hard time getting teachers. Teachers from big towns do not like to go to remote villages because life there seems dull. Many of these villages do not have electricity. There are no movies, radios, or telephones.

In the Indian villages, teachers must know the Indian language. That is another of Mexico's special problems of education. There

Village school children watch a puppet show. Village schools have a hard time hiring teachers.





A modern rural school. In rural districts a single school often serves several villages.

are still fifty Indian languages spoken in Mexico. About three million people still speak one or another of the Indian languages. This is about one out of every eight people in Mexico. About half of these also speak a little Spanish but prefer their own language. Indian children must learn to speak and study in Spanish, as well as to read and write and figure. To help solve this language problem, the government is training Indian young people to be teachers. They go to the government schools for a few years. Then they return home to teach their own people.

Because of these problems, many rural schools have teachers who have had very little training. Since there are not enough teachers, more than half the rural schools teach only the first



Boys learning to farm. In some rural districts schools have classes in farming.

three grades. In such schools the children learn only reading, writing, arithmetic, and history, and sometimes handicrafts.

In some country regions, the schools have classes in farming. The government sends a special teacher. It gives seeds and fertilizer* for school use. The pupils are taught to select the right crops for building up the soil. They are taught the use of fertilizer and how to control plant diseases. They learn by helping their teacher plant and care for the crops. Many grown men from the surrounding villages attend these schools.

Even city schools in Mexico are different from yours. Boys and girls do not go to school together. They have separate playgrounds and use separate wings of the school building. Children go to kindergarten just as you do. But they have only six years of elementary school instead of eight. Then they have three years of

A city school playground. Mexican boys and girls have separate playgrounds and classrooms.



“secondary” school, which is similar to your high school. But they have another two years in “preparatory” school before they go to the university. Children in elementary school study all the regular subjects that you study in elementary school. But they have to study more history, science, and language. Since they have only six years in which to learn all that, they have to study very hard. Mexican school children have their long vacation in midwinter, from November to February, instead of in the summer as you do.

— DO YOU KNOW —

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Why are only a little more than half of Mexico's children able to go to school? When will it be possible for all of them to go to school? | 2. What are some of the ways in which the schools of Mexico are like our schools? What are some of the ways in which they are different from our schools? |
|--|---|

A university class. Students must attend “preparatory” school before they go on to a university.





Voting for president. Mexico is slowly progressing toward a true democracy.

CHAPTER TWENTY

HOW MEXICO IS GOVERNED

In many ways Mexico's government is similar to our own. The constitution of Mexico is very much like the constitution of the United States. As in our country, the separate states are joined together under a federal government. Each of the twenty-nine states has its own constitution. Each elects its own governor and state legislature, and has its own state and local courts. Each state looks after its own affairs, but it cannot make laws that conflict with those of the federal government.



Mexico's Congress meets in Mexico City.* Mexico's constitution is similar to our own.

Like that of the United States, Mexico's constitution divides the government into three branches. The legislative branch, or Congress, makes the laws of Mexico. The judicial branch, or the system of courts, interprets and explains the laws. The executive branch, headed by the president, makes sure that the laws are carried out.

The president of Mexico is elected by the people for a term of six years. He cannot be re-elected. The duties of the Mexican president are similar to those of our own president. But he does have more power over Congress and the making of laws than our president has. His cabinet is composed of the heads of government

departments. These department heads are appointed by the president.

There is no vice-president in Mexico. If the president dies, the Minister of Government acts as president. Like our Secretary of State, he is the highest ranking cabinet member.

The Congress of Mexico, like our own, has two houses. The Chamber of Deputies is like our House of Representatives. Each state of Mexico elects one deputy for every 150,000 of its citizens. The Senate is made up of two senators from each state and two from the Federal District. The Federal District, where Mexico City, the capital, is located, corresponds to our District of Columbia. The congressmen cannot be elected for two successive terms, as ours can.

The National Palace in Mexico City houses many of the government offices.

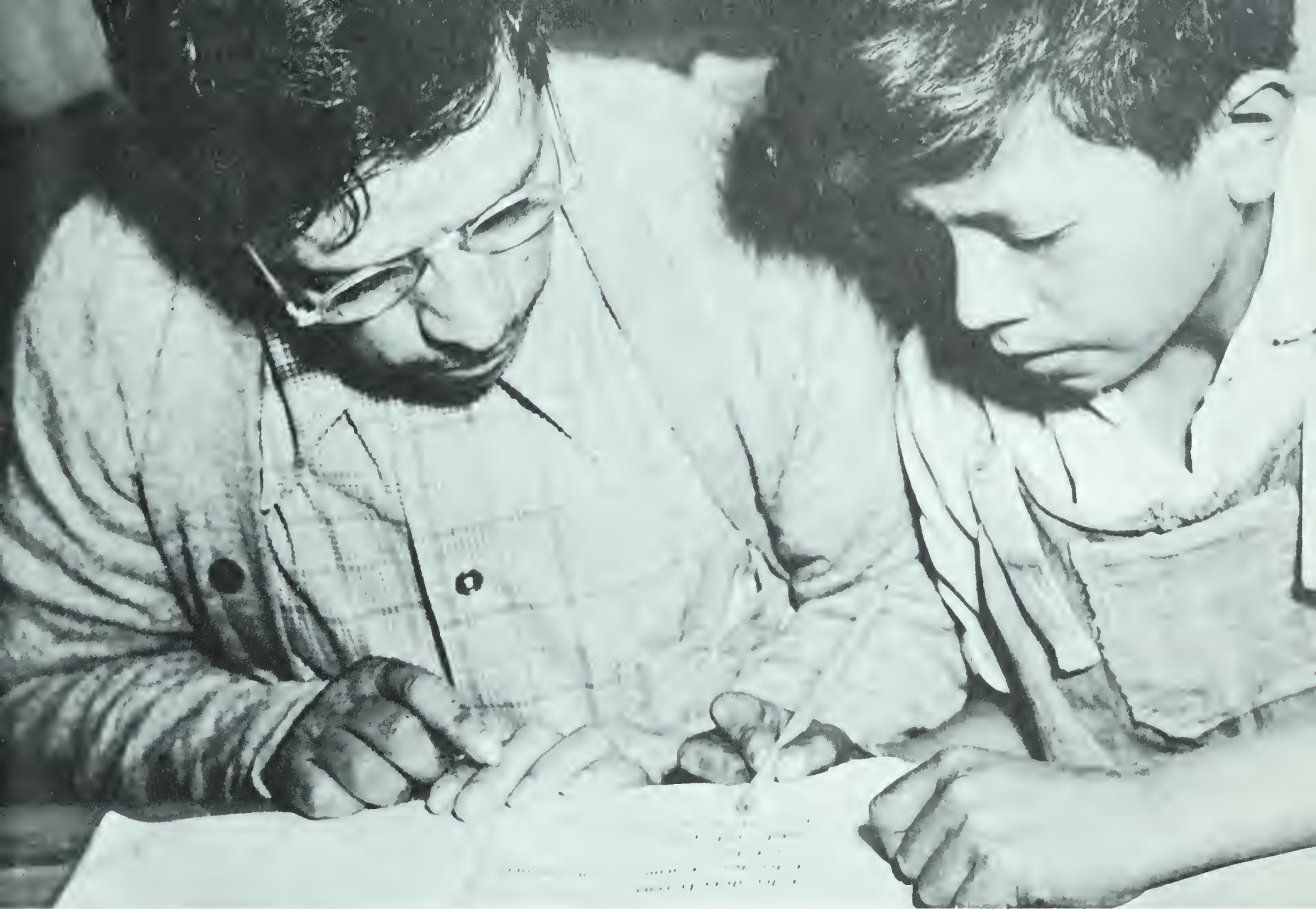


In Mexico the system of courts is very different from ours. There are no juries to decide if a person on trial is guilty or innocent. All cases, even murder cases, are decided by the judge. The eleven judges of the Supreme Court are elected for life by the Chamber of Deputies. They appoint circuit* and district* judges for four-year terms. Judges of the lower courts are appointed locally.

When Americans ask about the government of Mexico, they want to know if it is really a democracy. They wonder if the Mexican people really choose the officials of their government. These questions cannot be answered by merely saying "yes" or "no."

A government reading center in the Yucatán jungle. Many reading centers have been organized.





Father and son are learning to read. Many adults are still unable to read.

Mexico has had many problems that the United States has not had. These problems have made it difficult for her to form a democratic government. The history of the country has led the people to trust in strong leaders and rarely to question their power. This has often brought bad government to the people. Also, not all Mexicans can take part in their government. Millions of people live in isolated villages, where they are cut off from the rest of the country. Many of them speak only their native Indian languages and do not even understand Spanish, the official language. They have their own local problems and are not interested in any government except that of their own village.

Another thing that makes true democracy difficult is the fact that there is only one strong political party in Mexico. This party,



A political rally. More Mexican people are taking an active part in their government.

known as the PRI (Party of Revolutionary Institutions), controls the government. However, since the reform of the election laws in 1945, new parties have had a better chance of winning some offices. Conditions are improving with every election. More people

are voting, and there is evidence that the votes are now being counted fairly.

Mexico's present government is making many reforms. These are designed to give the people more benefits and a greater part in government. More and more people are learning to read and write, so they can read about what is going on in the country. New roads to remote areas make the people feel closer to the capital and the government. There are new laws to keep government employees from using their offices for graft.* Slowly but surely, Mexico is progressing toward true democracy.

DO YOU KNOW

1. In what ways is Mexico's government similar to our own?
2. How does Mexico's court system differ from ours?
3. How is Mexico's president chosen?
4. Explain two problems that have made it difficult for Mexico to form a democratic government.

Making Posters that will interest more Mexicans in learning how to read and take part in government.



GLOSSARY

Your study of Mexico will be more interesting if you take time to use this glossary.

You should turn to this glossary each time a word that you read in the text is marked with an asterisk (*), unless you clearly understand the word. The letters that appear inside the brackets following each word show you how the word should sound when it is correctly pronounced. The capital letters used in indicating the pronunciation show you which syllable of the word is to receive the chief stress, as: Tampico (tahm PEE koh).

The meaning of each word in the glossary is explained to help you better understand the text and pictures of this book. You will learn much more about Mexico if you will use this glossary.

Acapulco (*ah kah POOL koh*). A seaport on the southern Pacific coast, in the state of Guerrero, Mexico.

adobe (*ah DOH bay*). A tough clay or the building bricks made of it. To make adobe bricks, the clay is mixed with straw, pressed into shape, and dried in the sun for several days.

Alameda (*ah lah MAY dah*). The name of a park in the business part of Mexico City.

All Saints' Day. A festival of the Catholic church observed November 1. It is celebrated to honor all the saints in heaven.

All Souls' Day. A Catholic church feast observed November 2. It is a special day to pray for the souls in purgatory.

Anáhuac (*ah NAH hwack*). A Nahuatl word meaning "place of water." There used to be several lakes in the Valley of Mexico, so the Indians called it "The Valley of Anáhuac."

aqueduct (*AK we dukt*). An artificial channel to carry water. The one at Tenochtitlan was made of cement and carried water from Chapultepec Hill on the shore to the island city.

archives (*AHR kives*). A place in which public records or historical documents are kept, especially those belonging to a government.

astronomy (*ahs TRAHN oh mee*). The study of the sun, moon, and stars.

avocado (*ah voh KAH doh*). A tropical fruit with a large seed and smooth, oily flesh. It is eaten as a salad.

Aztec (*AZ teck*). From the Indian name Azteca (*ahs TAY kah*). The name of an ancient Indian people, made up of many tribes.

Aztec-Mexica. See **Mexica**.

cacao (*kah KAH oh*). The tropical "chocolate tree." Also its fruit, which is a big pod, like a soft nut, containing several seeds or "cacao beans" from which chocolate is made.

campesino (*cahm pay SEE noh*). Spanish for a man who lives in the country. A country woman is a **campesina**, and all (plural) are **campesinos**. Mexican country people really live in villages, and **campesinos** means villagers who farm their fields, as distinguished from village craftsmen, such as potters, weavers, and tinsmiths.

Cárdenas (*KAHR den us*), **Lázaro** (*LAH sah roh*), 1895-. The president of Mexico from 1934 to 1940.

Carlota (*kahr LOH tah*), 1840-1927. The Spanish for Charlotte. Name of the Empress of Mexico from 1864 to 1867.

Catholic church. Shortened name for the Roman Catholic church of which the Pope is the head. Most Mexicans are Catholics.

causeway. A raised road or bridge over marshy ground or across water, generally a lake or a bay. Those at Tenochtitlan connected the island city with the shores of the lake.

Central Plateau. The high plateau in central Mexico.

Chapala (*chah PAH lah*). Name of the largest lake in Mexico, in the state of Jalisco. Also a village on its north shore.

Chapultepec (*chah pool tay PECK*). A Nahuatl word meaning "Hill of grasshoppers." Name of a big park with a tiny, spring-fed lake in Mexico city.

Chiapas (*chee AH pahs*). Name of a state in Mexico. It is the southernmost state, bordering on Guatemala.

chicle (*CHEEK lay*). The gummy sap of a tree found in Yucatán, southern Mexico, and in Central America. Used to make chewing gum.

chili (*CHEE lee*). Name of any of many kinds of hot peppers. In Mexico they are used as seasoning, or are eaten raw or pickled.

circuit judge. Originally, a judge who held court in several places, making a "circuit" of towns. A Mexican circuit judge's court has authority over a number of districts to settle cases that district judges cannot decide.

cobbled. Paved with cobblestones, which are little stones of odd shapes and sizes. These are fitted together to pave a street, road, or patio, instead of using cement or asphalt.

Cortes (*cor TEZ*), **Hernando** (*her NAHN doh*), 1485-1547. The Spanish conqueror of Mexico. He was only thirty-six years old when he conquered Tenochtitlan.

criollo (*kree OH yoh*). The Spanish for creole, a person of Spanish blood, born and raised in a colony. In Mexico, it means a Mexican of pure Spanish blood.

Cuauhtémoc (*koo ah ooh TAY moke*), 1495?-1525. The last Aztec emperor, who defended Tenochtitlan and was defeated by the armies of Cortes in 1521.

Cuba (*KYU bah*). In Spanish, (*KOO bah*). An island in the West Indies.

Day of the Dead. An old Indian festival which falls on November 1 and 2, All Saints' and All Souls' days. In Mexico, it is the day when the Dead return to be fed, as in ancient Indian times.

Díaz (*DEE us*), **Porfirio** (*Por FEER ee oh*), 1830-1915. Dictator of Mexico from 1876 to 1911. Overthrown in the Revolution of 1910. Died in exile.

dictator. One who rules a country with absolute authority. His orders are the law and he can change them when he likes.

district judge. Judge of a district court. States are divided into districts, usually containing several towns each. A district has its own court to settle certain cases.

Eastern Sierra Madre. See **Sierra Madre**.

facade (*fah SAHD*). The front of any building, especially one with ornamentation.

fertilizer. Plant food put on the land to make it produce more crops.

fiesta (*fee ESS tah*). The Spanish word for "feast" or "festival." Also it means any kind of a party.

Floating Gardens. Name of the island gardens of Xochimilco. Long ago the Xochimilcans made gardens on rafts which they floated on the lake to protect them from enemies. In time dirt filled in under the rafts and they became tiny islands.

geometric design (*gee oh MET rick*). A design made up of lines, curves, circles, triangles, zigzags, and squares.

gourd. A hard-shelled fruit that grows on a vine. It grows in many shapes and sizes. Its shell is used to make dippers, bowls, ornaments, and rhythm-making rattles.

graft. Obtaining money or position by dishonest means.

Grito (*GREE toh*). Spanish word for "cry" or "shout." So "the Grito" on the night of September 15, 1810, was the "cry" for independence.

Guadalajara (*gwah dah lah HAH rah*). The second largest city in Mexico. Capital of the state of Jalisco.

Guadalupe, Our Lady of (*gwah dah LOO pay*). Special name for the Virgin Mary as she appeared to the Indian boy, Juan Diego, in 1531. She is Mexico's patron saint.

Guatemala (*gwah tay MAH lah*). A country in Central America. It borders southern Mexico.

Gulf coast. The land along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

hacienda (*ah see EN dah*). Spanish word for a large farm estate.

henequen (*HEN ee ken*). In Spanish, (*en ay KANE*). A plant that grows in Yucatán. It has big, yellowish leaves from which is obtained a strong fiber for making ropes and twine.

Hidalgo y Costilla (*ee DAHL goh ee kose TEE yah*), **Miguel** (*mee GALE*), 1753-1811. A brave Catholic priest who was a leader in the Revolution for Independence. Father Hidalgo is one of Mexico's greatest patriot-heroes.

hieroglyphics (*high er oh GLIF icks*). A method of writing with geometric designs and tiny pictures to represent words or ideas. Used by ancient Mexican Indians and early Egyptians.

Holy Week. In Spanish, **Semana Santa** (say MAH nah SAHN tah). The week before Easter Sunday. It commemorates the last week of Christ's life.

iguana (ee GWAH nah). A large tropical lizard that lives in southern Mexico. May vary from one foot to six feet in length. Both flesh and eggs are good to eat.

Ixtlaccihuatl (eesh tlahk SEE hwatl). A Nahuatl word meaning "White Woman." Name of one of the two volcanic, snow-capped peaks near Mexico City.

jade. A very hard gem stone, usually green but sometimes white. Used in jewelry-making. The ancient Indians used it also for carved plaques and inlay on masks and ornamentations.

Juárez (HWAHR ess), **Benito** (bay NEE toh), 1806-1872. Great patriot-statesman. President of Mexico from 1857 to 1872. Overthrew the empire of Maximilian and restored the republic.

lacquer. A kind of paint made by mixing color with certain saps and gums. It is applied in many coats, highly polished, and makes a very hard, smooth surface.

limewater. A weak solution of water and slaked lime. Healthful.

loom, horizontal. A frame for weaving thread or yarn into cloth. Cloth can be woven only as wide as the weaver can reach as he sits with the loom bar attached to his belt.

maguery (mah GAY). A plant with spiny, thick leaves. Some varieties yield fibers for weaving a coarse cloth.

mango (MANG goh). A sweet, delicious, tropical fruit with a large seed.

Mardi Gras (MAHR dee grah). Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, which is the beginning of Lent. In the United States, name often applied to the days of carnival preceding Lent.

Maximilian (mack se MILL yahn), 1832-1867. The Austrian Archduke who became Emperor of Mexico in 1864 with the help of France. Was overthrown and executed in 1867.

Mayan (MAH yahn). One of the greatest and most important Indian people of Mexico. There are many Mayan tribes still living in Yucatán, the southern Mexican states, and Guatemala.

Mejicano (may hee KAH noh). The Spanish for Mexican. Also name for tribes descended from the Aztec-Mexica.

mestizo (mess TEE soh). A Spanish word meaning hybrid or mixed blood. It refers specifically to Mexicans who have both Spanish and Indian blood.

Mexica (may SHEE kah). The Aztec Indian tribe that founded Tenochtitlan, now Mexico City, in 1325.

Mexico City. Largest city and capital of Mexico, in the Federal District. It was built on the ruins of the Indian city of Tenochtitlan and renamed in 1521.

milagro (mee LAH groh). Spanish word for "miracle." It is also the name given to little silver images offered to the Virgin when one is ill, as a prayer for a miracle of healing.

Moctezuma (moke tay SOO mah), 1480?-1520. Spanish name for the Emperor of Tenochtitlan who was ruling when the Spanish came. In English, usually written **Montezuma** (mahn te ZOO mah), perhaps because it is easier to pronounce.

Mojave Desert (moh HAH vee). A very hot desert region in the southeastern part of California, and western Arizona.

Monterrey (mone tayr RAY). Large city in the state of Nuevo León, Mexico.

mural. From the Latin word for wall. In art, it is a painting, painted right on a wall.

muslin (MUZ lin). A fine cotton cloth.

Nacimiento (nah see mee EN toh). Spanish for "birth." It refers to the groups of little figures that make up the Nativity scene, which is the scene of the birth of the Christ Child.

Nahuatl (NAH hwatl). Name of the language spoken by Aztecs and Toltecs.

nopal cactus (noh PAHL). In English (NOH pahl). The prickly pear. Its leaves are eaten as a vegetable. It bears a small, spiny fruit.

- obsidian.** Volcanic glass, harder than stone. It is usually black. It can be chipped or split to make a fine-edged tool. The ancient Indians used it to make knives and chisels.
- Orizaba** (*oh ree SAH bah*). Mexico's highest mountain peak, in the state of Veracruz. Also the name of a large town nearby.
- papaya** (*pah PAH yah*). Large, melon-like fruit that grows on a tree. Its flesh is yellow-orange and its seeds taste like pepsin.
- papier-mâché** (*PAY per mah SHAY*). A substance made of paper pulp mixed with a special glue so it can be molded into any shape. When it sets it is quite hard and solid.
- Paseo de la Reforma** (*pah SAY oh day lah ray FOR mah*). Name of a wide, beautiful street in Mexico City, with a parkway, wide walks, and a bridle path. **Paseo** is Spanish for a walk, a nice place to walk or ride.
- patio** (*PAH tee oh*). A court or garden around which a house is built. Often the house makes up only three sides, and the fourth side is a high wall.
- petate** (*pay TAH tay*). A woven straw mat that serves as a rug. Also laid on the floor or on a frame and used as a bed.
- piñata** (*peen YAH tah*). An earthen pot concealed in a papier-mâché angel, star, or lamb. It is filled with goodies and small gifts. Piñatas are especially for Christmas parties.
- plaza** (*PLAH sah*). Place or public square. It is usually a small park, around which are the main buildings of the town. All Mexican towns and cities are built around a central plaza.
- Popo** (*POH poh*). An affectionate nickname for Popocatepetl.
- Popocatepetl** (*poh poh kah TAY petl*). The name of one of the two snow-capped volcanic peaks overlooking the Valley of Mexico. It is a Nahuatl word that means "Smoking Mountain."
- posada** (*poh SAH dah*). The Spanish word for inn. Also a party or certain religious ceremonies during the nine days before Christmas.
- produce** (*PRO duce*). Anything made or grown for a profit, especially things raised on a farm or hacienda for sale.
- Puebla** (*pooh AY blah*). Mexico's third largest city. Capital of state of Puebla. Noted for pottery- and tile-making.
- Quetzalcoatl** (*ket TSAHL kwatl*). Name of the old Indian god of civilization and of day. Also called the "White God" for his symbolic color.
- rebozo** (*ray BOH soh*). A long, fringed shawl, usually hand-woven of cotton or silk. The best ones are of cotton so fine that a yard-wide rebozo can be drawn through a wedding ring.
- regional dances.** Dances traditional to a region. Each Mexican community has its own forms of the old dances for each season.
- rock crystal.** Very hard, transparent, white quartz. The Indians carved it into vases, bowls, and ritual masks.
- sarape** (*sah RAH pay*). A hand-woven wool blanket. Some are used as rugs, or for bed coverings. Others are made with a slit in the center to put the head through and serve as cloaks for men.
- Sierra Madre** (*see AIR ah MAH dray*). A main mountain range. **The Western Sierra Madre** in Mexico is really a continuation of our Rocky Mountains. **The Eastern Sierra Madre** goes down the east coast of Mexico. These two ranges meet in about the middle of Mexico and extend south as a single range, **The Southern Sierra Madre**.
- sombrero** (*soam BRAY roh*). The Spanish word for hat — any kind of a hat.
- Sonora Desert** (*soh NOH rah*). A desert region in the state of Sonora (north-west Mexico), which borders Arizona.
- Southern Sierra Madre.** See **Sierra Madre**.
- Talavera** (*tah lah VAY rah*). Fine glazed pottery made in Puebla. So named because it is made in the same way, with the same kind of clay, and originally with same designs and colors as that made in Talavera, Spain.

tamales (*tah MAHL ays*). Cornmeal mush with bits of meat and chili in it, wrapped in corn husks or banana leaves (depending on region), cooked by steaming. This is the plural form. Just one is a **tamal** (*tah MAHL*).

Tampico (*tahm PEE koh*). Large seaport in state of Tamaulipas, Mexico, on the Gulf of Mexico. Has many oil fields and refineries.

Taxco (*TAHS koh*). Name of a town in state of Guerrero, Mexico. Silver mining and silversmithing are carried on here. Its old Indian name was **Tlaxco** (*TLASH koh*).

Tehuantepec (*tay wan tay PECK*). Name of the isthmus (130 mi. wide) from Gulf of Mexico to the south Pacific coast of Mexico. Also a town in Oaxaca, on the Pacific side of the isthmus.

Tenochtitlan (*tay noch TEE tlan*). This is the Indian pronunciation but most Mexicans say (*tay noch teet LAHN*). The Aztec city built on an island in Lake Texcoco in 1325. Now Mexico City.

Teotihuacán (*tay oh tee wah KAHN*). City that once stood in the Valley of Mexico. Nothing is left now but the great Pyramids of Teotihuacán, and ruins of old palaces. In Nahuatl it means "place where the gods lived."

tile. A piece of fired clay used for floors or roofs. Fine glazed colored tile used for floors and walls and for decorating buildings. Mural pictures are often made of glazed tiles.

Tlaxcala (*tlahs KAH lah*). Name of a state in Mexico and also the capital city of the state.

Toltec (*TOLE teck*). Name of an Indian people that once dominated the high Valley of Mexico. Also the name used for their great cultural period.

Torrid Zone. The hot zone around the equator. It extends from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn.

tortilla (*tor TEE yah*). A thin cake made of cornmeal and toasted. It is the principal bread of Mexico.

trestle (*TRESS 'l*). A framework of timbers or steelwork, which is usually quite high, built to carry a road or railroad over a depression.

Veracruz (*vay rah CROOS*). A state in Mexico. Also Mexico's largest seaport, on the Gulf of Mexico. The first Spanish town in Mexico. Founded in 1519.

viceroys. The representative of the king of a country, sent to rule distant colonies in the king's name.

Western Sierra Madre. See **Sierra Madre**.

White Lady. (See **Ixtlaccihuatl**.)

Xochimilco (*soh chee MEEL koh*). In Nahuatl (*show chee MEEL koh*). A town near Mexico City and its old lake. The site of the "Floating Gardens."

Yucatán (*you kah TAHN*). A tropical state and peninsula in eastern Mexico. It is the home of the Mayan Indians and is famous for ruins of Mayan cities.

zapote (*sah POH tay*). Any one of several tropical fruits that grow on sapota (*zapote*) trees.

Zócalo (*SOH kah loh*). The central plaza in Mexico City. This word is Spanish for socle, which is the foundation for the pedestal of a statue. In colonial times such a base was laid in the central plaza of Mexico City, but the statue was never put on it. That base, or "zócalo," became a popular meeting place. In time the old base disappeared, but the spot was still called "the zócalo," and gradually the name was applied to the plaza itself.

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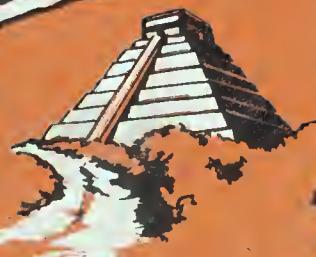


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